MARVEL

SECRET AVENGERS

RUN THE MISSION, DON'T GET SEEN,
SAVE THE WORLD

BY WARREN ELLIS

McKELVIE • WALKER • AJA • LARK • MALEEV • IMMONEN

SECRET AVENGERS

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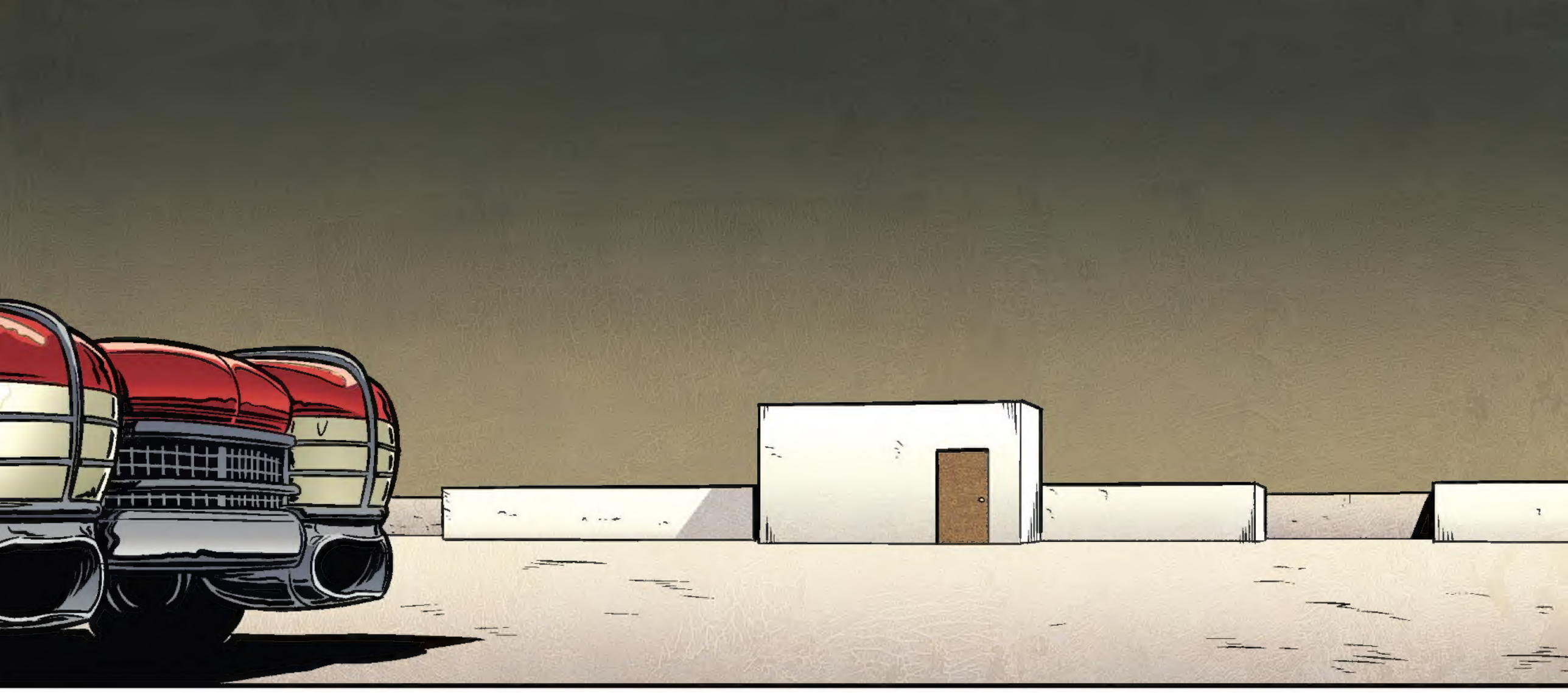
"SUBLAND EMPIRE"



ABSOLUTELY FASCINATING. A MARVEL OF PHYSICAL ENGINEERING, REALLY...LOWERED A MILE BY CHAINS, COUNTERWEIGHTS AND SWITCHES...

CAN WE GET BACK UP?

INDUBITABLY. THE COUNTERWEIGHTS WILL FLIP OVER AND WE'LL BE PULLED BACK UP TO THE SURFACE. THE SECRET EMPIRE WAS REALLY VERY GOOD, WASN'T IT?

PUTTING A SECRET CITY MORE THAN A MILE UNDER CINCINNATI WAS CLEVER, TOO: NO SUBWAY SYSTEM TO DISTURB OR DISCOVER IT.

IF WE HADN'T DETECTED STRAY PARTICLES OF VON DOOM RADIATION, WE NEVER WOULD HAVE KNOWN TO LOOK. THIS SHIELDING WOULD STOP A NUKE, LET ALONE RADIO WAVES...

SO WHY DIDN'T IT STOP YOUR VON DOOM RADIATION?

BECAUSE NOTHING CAN STOP VON DOOM RADIATION.

IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO SCREEN ANY KIND OF TIME-TRAVEL EMISSION.

AND A VON DOOM TIME PLATFORM IS VERY DIRTY, VERY NOISY.

THE VON DOOM TIME PLATFORM, SEEN HERE PROJECTING ITS RISING "PLATE" FIELD

OH, LOOK AT THIS. THIS IS GORGEOUS.

IT'S GROTESQUE.

IT'S SOMETHING ONLY A SOVIET UNION GIRL COULD LOVE, HANK. WILL IT RUN?

...GOOD GRIEF.

OH, IT'LL RUN. PROBABLY FOR ANOTHER TWO HUNDRED YEARS.

NATASHA, YOU'VE FOUND YOURSELF AN ATOMIC CADILLAC.

THIS IS QUITE FRIGHTENING, ACTUALLY... CHROMIUM TANK, SOME KIND OF TRITIUM REPLACEMENT...

CHECK WEAPONS.

WIDOW, YOU TOO. WE'RE MORE OPEN THAN I EXPECTED, AND YOUR WIDOW'S BITE BRACELETS HAVE NEVER BEEN TERRIFIC AT LONG RANGE.

FLECHETTE GUNS, PROVIDED TO US BY THE GOVERNMENT VIA AN EAGER CONTRACTOR, FIRING SOLID TILES OF SOMETHING SADLY TERMED *"SHOCKTOXIN."*

MILLED TO A MONOFILAMENT EDGE: THEY'LL CUT THROUGH BODY ARMOR LIKE A SPOON THROUGH MOUSSE.

SHOCKTOXIN IS A NERVE AGENT. ONE FLECHETTE WILL PUT A HEALTHY BULL INTO A CHEMICAL COMA FOR SIX HOURS.

HAPLESS TEST SUBJECTS REPORT NIGHTMARES ON A SCALE USUALLY KNOWN ONLY TO THOSE WHO RECREATIONALLY SMOKE CLEANING PRODUCTS.

THE FLECHETTES DISSOLVE WITHIN A FEW MINUTES OF CONTACT WITH AIR. UNTRACEABLE.

SECRET BULLETS FOR SECRET AVENGERS.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND MINE.

YOURS FIRES FLECHETTES MACHINED TO THE SIZE AND WEIGHT OF YOUR SIGNATURE CRESCENT DARTS, MR. SPECTOR.

I GET THAT. I JUST DON'T KNOW WHY MINE ISN'T THE SAME AS ROGERS'.

COMMANDER ROGERS IS A SUPER-SOLDIER WHO CAN MASTER ANY WEAPON IN SECONDS.

YOU ARE A BORDERLINE PSYCHOTIC WHO WEARS A WHITE BAG OVER HIS HEAD IN PUBLIC.

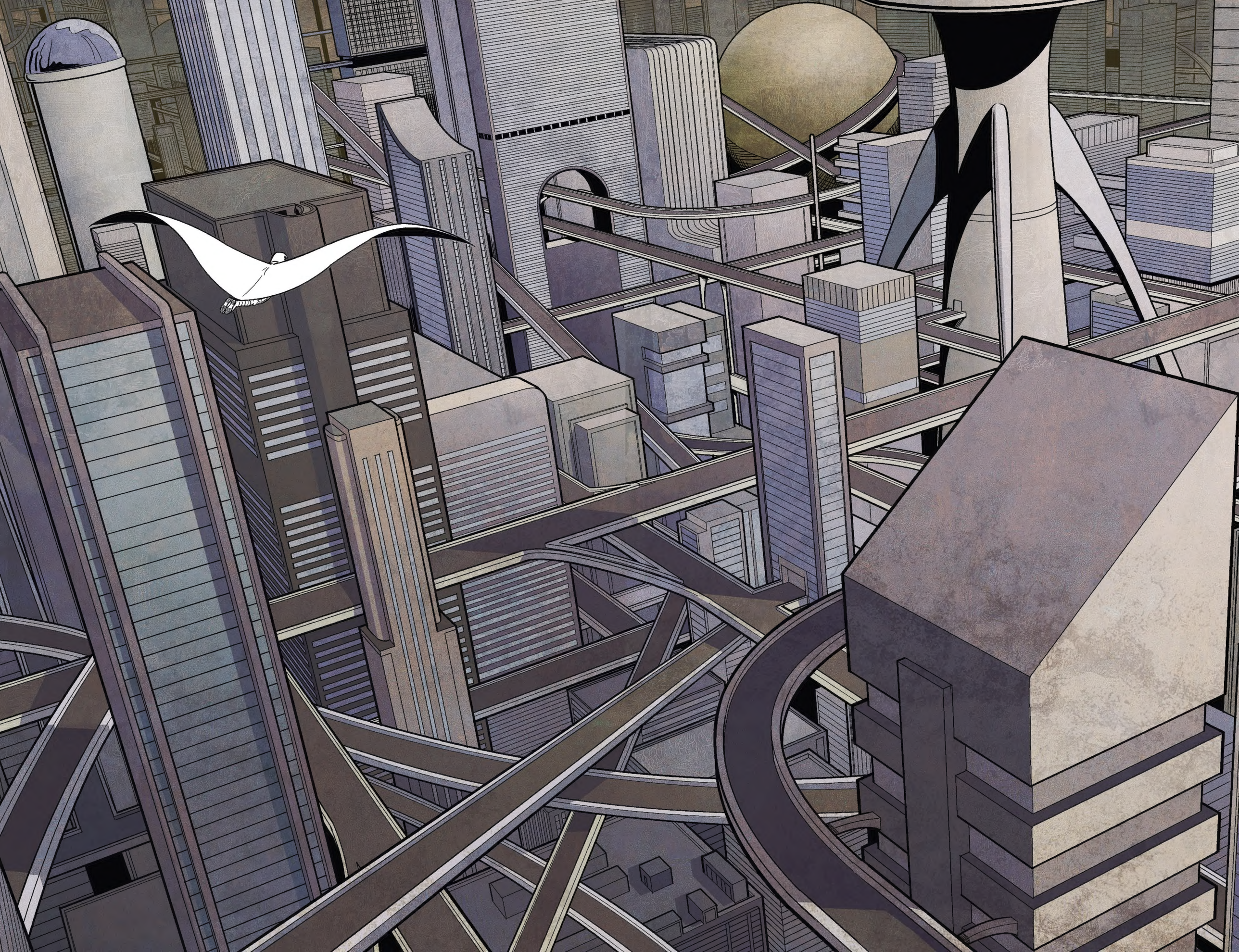
I IMAGINE EVERYONE THOUGHT IT'D BE BEST TO MAKE THINGS EASY FOR YOU.

THAT'S ENOUGH.

WE'LL TAKE QUINCARRIER ZERO. IT'S SMALLER, BUT FASTER.

BEAST, MOON KNIGHT, BLACK WIDOW: MOVE OUT.

MOON KNIGHT. AERIAL RECON.



OH MY GOD. PUSH-BUTTON IGNITION. SO DECADENT.

I HAVE TO SAY, THOUGH: ARE WE REALLY WORRIED ABOUT A TIME MACHINE? PARTICULARLY ONE BASED ON SOME ANCIENT DOCTOR DOOM DESIGN?

WELL, FIRSTLY, WE DON'T KNOW WHO'S DOWN HERE. THE SECRET EMPIRE'S LONG GONE. THIS COULD BE ANOTHER SHADOW COUNCIL ENCLAVE.

AND, SECONDLY, ANY TIME MACHINE IS A WEAPON. AN INCREDIBLY COMPLEX AND DANGEROUS ONE.

PEOPLE ALWAYS FORGET THAT A TIME MACHINE IS ALSO A SPACE MACHINE.

AS WE GO FORWARD IN TIME, WE MOVE FORWARD IN SPACE: THE EARTH TURNS AROUND THE SUN, THE SUN ORBITS THE GALAXY, GALAXIES SPIN AROUND THE UNIVERSE.

SO TO GO BACK IN TIME ON EARTH, YOU HAVE TO ALSO BE SENT TO THE POSITION YOUR TARGET WAS AT THAT TIME IN THE PAST.

THEREFORE, IF I WERE TO SEND YOU A WEEK BACK IN TIME WITHOUT DOING THE OTHER CALCULATIONS--

--YOU WOULD MATERIALIZE IN DEEP SPACE AND BE DEAD IN THIRTY SECONDS.

...AH.

I'M JUST IMAGINING ALL THOSE OLD SECRET EMPIRE AGENTS TOOLING AROUND THEIR HIDDEN CITY IN ATOMIC CADILLACS.

PARTY TOWN. VODKA MARTINIS AND WORLD DOMINATION.

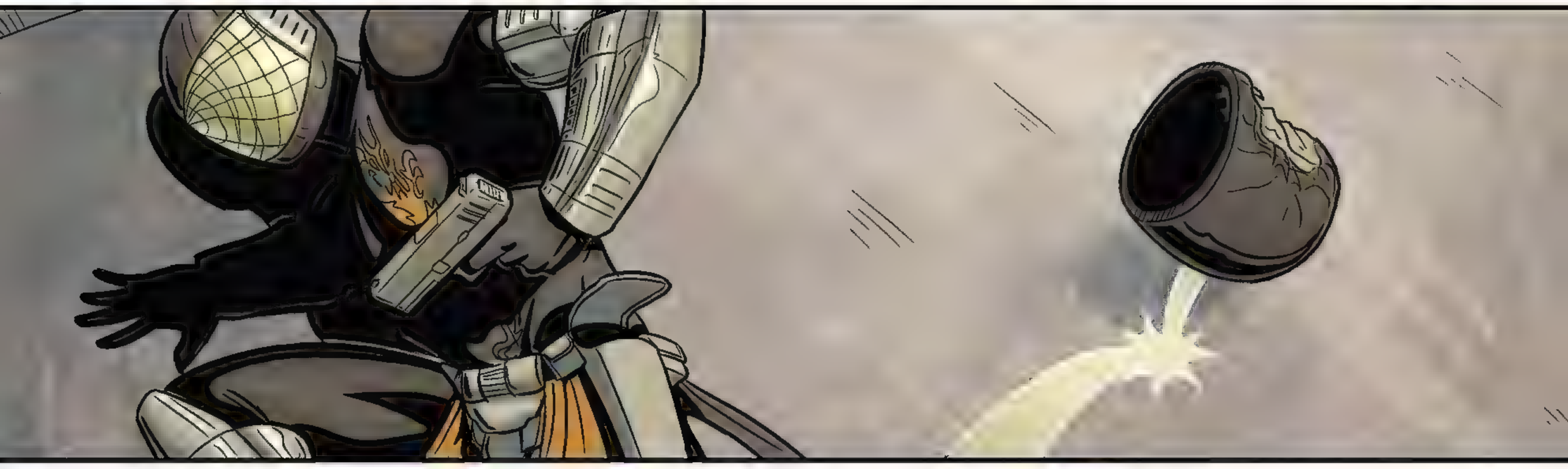
MOON KNIGHT TO COMMANDER ROGERS: SEEMS QUIET. I KEEP GLIMPSING SOME KIND OF STRUCTURE FURTHER OUT, TO THE NORTHEAST...

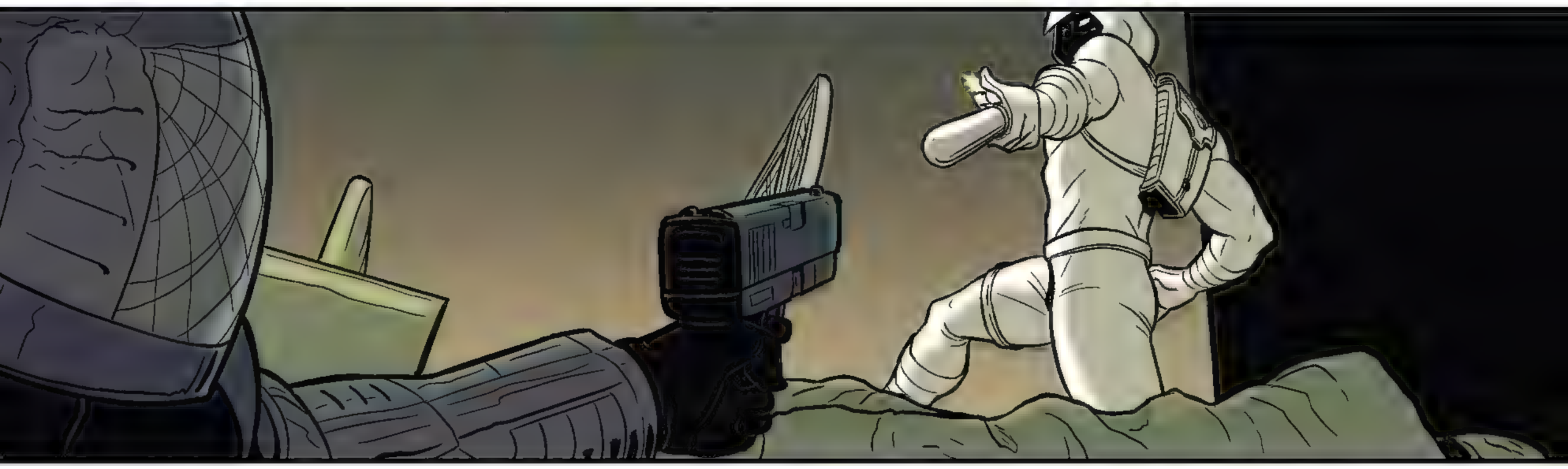
...WAIT.

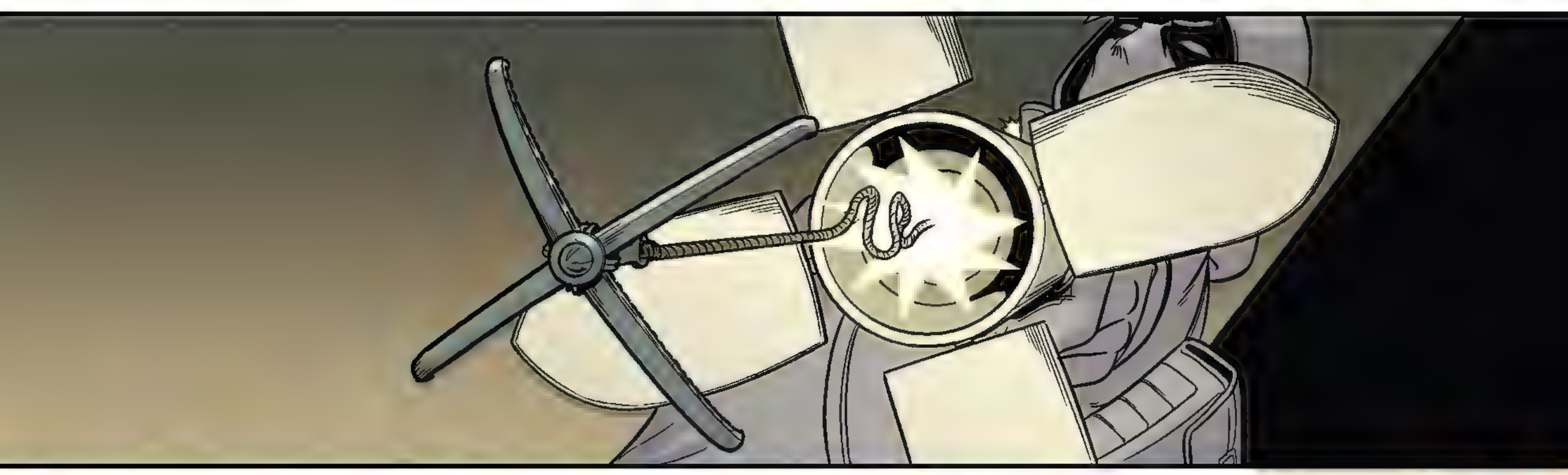
I'M UNDER ATTACK BY A RIGHT-HAND-DRIVE SHADOW COUNCIL SECURITY PATROL VEHICLE.

"RIGHT-HAND-DRIVE" SOUNDS LESS SINISTER WHEN I SAY IT OUT LOUD FOR SOME REASON.

STAND BY.







...EVEN THE MORE OBVIOUS FORMS OF TIME-TRAVEL CRIME, LIKE, SAY, SENDING A MODERN ARMY TO DEFEND ROME FROM THE VISIGOTHS...

MOON KNIGHT TO COMMANDER ROGERS: WE CAN ASSUME AT THIS POINT THAT THIS FACILITY HAS BEEN REACTIVATED BY THE SHADOW COUNCIL.

WE'RE NOT ALONE DOWN HERE. WATCH YOUR BACKS.

RETURN FIRE, HANK!

WHERE'S YOUR GUN?

WHAT WITH?

WHAT GUN? I CAN'T FIRE A GUN! I HAVE *PAWS!*

THEN GET DOWN.

AMATEURS.

ALSO, YOUR CAR ISN'T AS GOOD AS MINE.

I THINK MY WIDOW'S BITE IS STILL EFFECTIVE ENOUGH AT MEDIUM RANGE, STEVE.

YOU WERE LUCKY. DON'T GET SMUG, NATASHA.

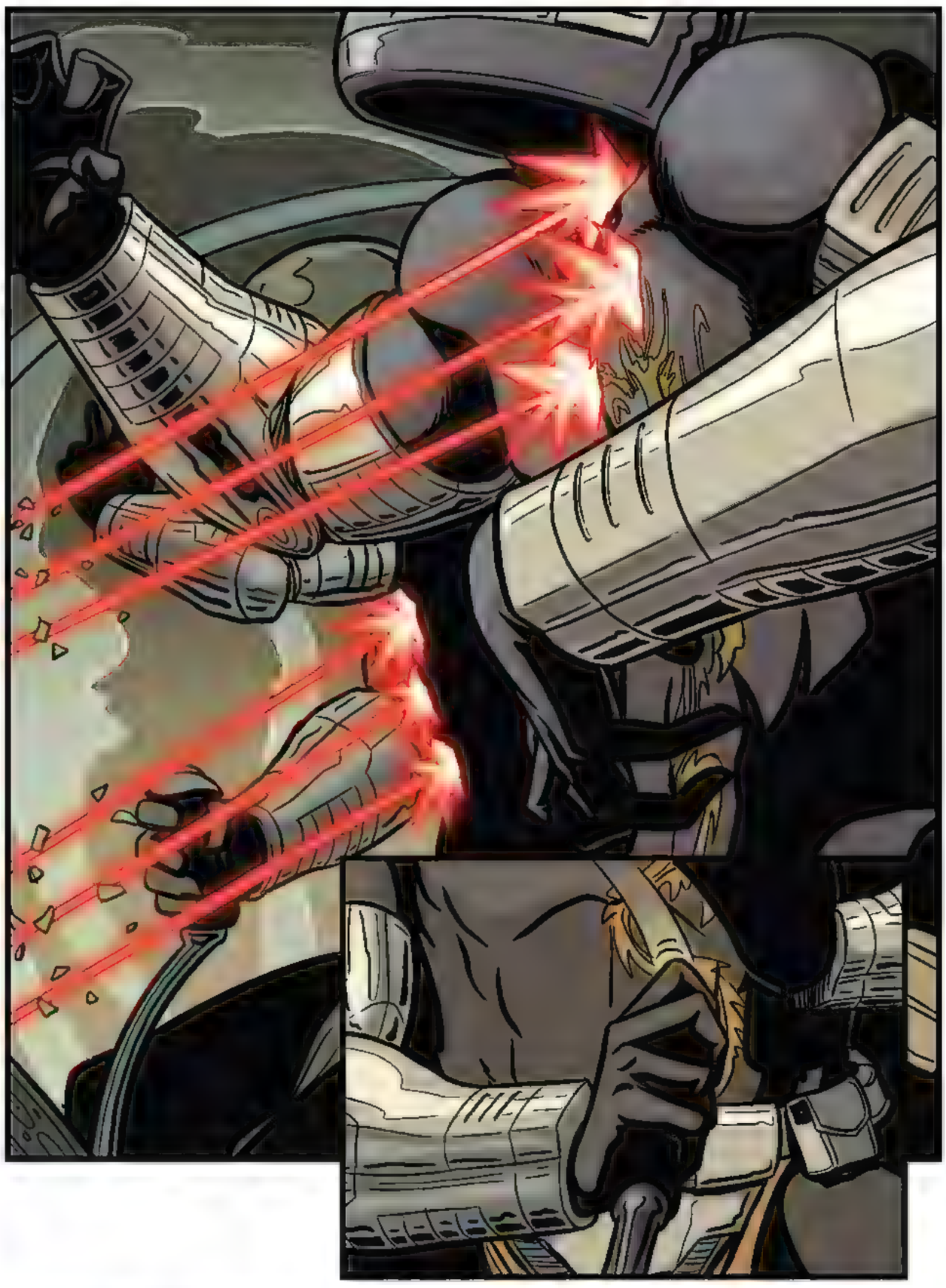
LOOK FOR A WAY BACK TO HIGH GROUND.

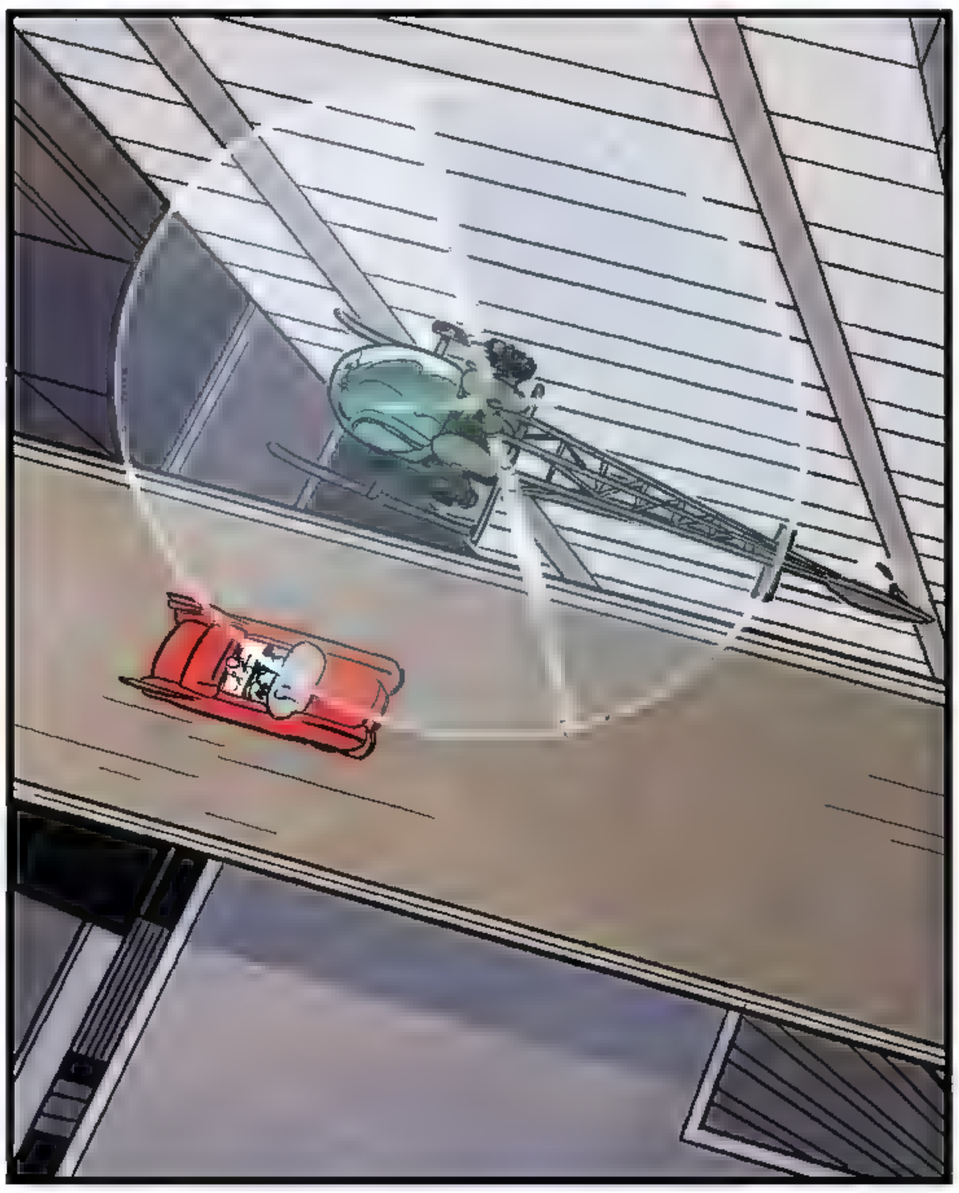
INTERESTING. THE SHADOW COUNCIL REACTIVATING AN OLD SECRET EMPIRE INSTALLATION...BUT USING THE VEHICLES LEFT DOWN HERE.

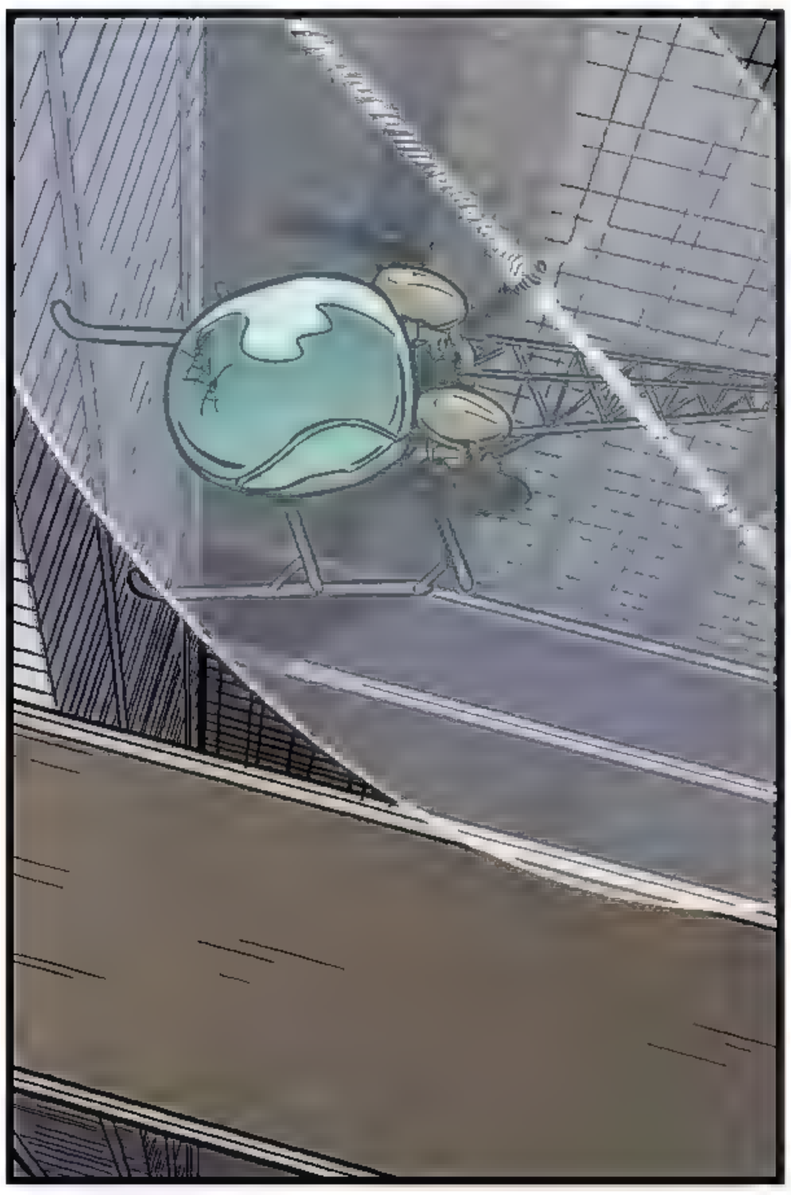
WHICH MAY MEAN THAT THE SECRET EMPIRE WAS MOST OF THE WAY TO HAVING A WORKING TIME PLATFORM DOWN HERE BEFORE THEY ABANDONED THE PLACE.

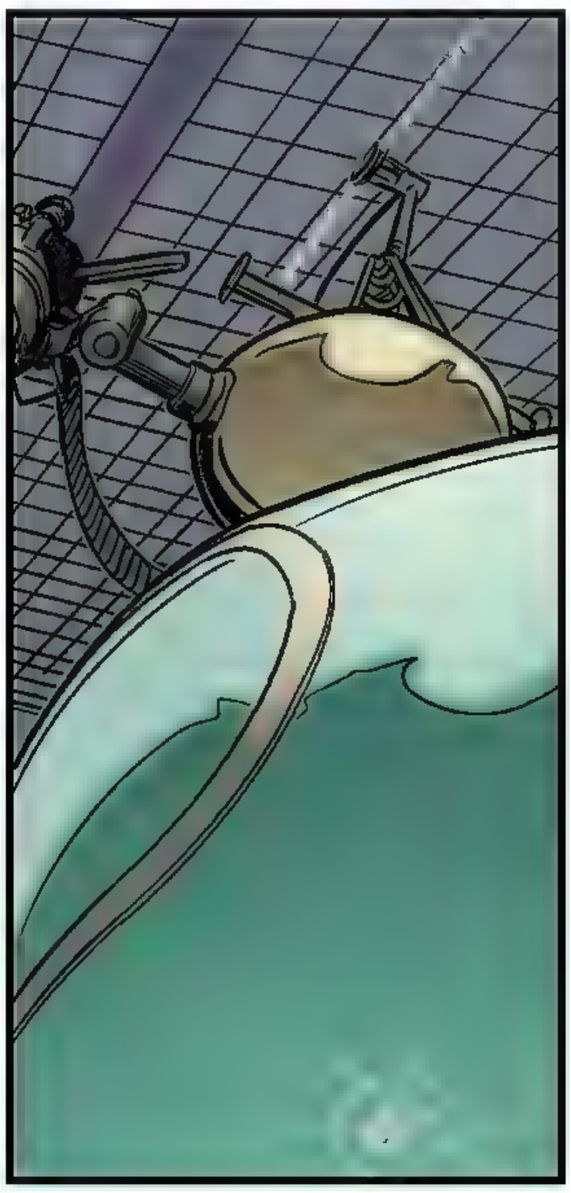
STILL. A FEW OPERATIVES IN CARS AREN'T MUCH TO WORRY ABOUT.

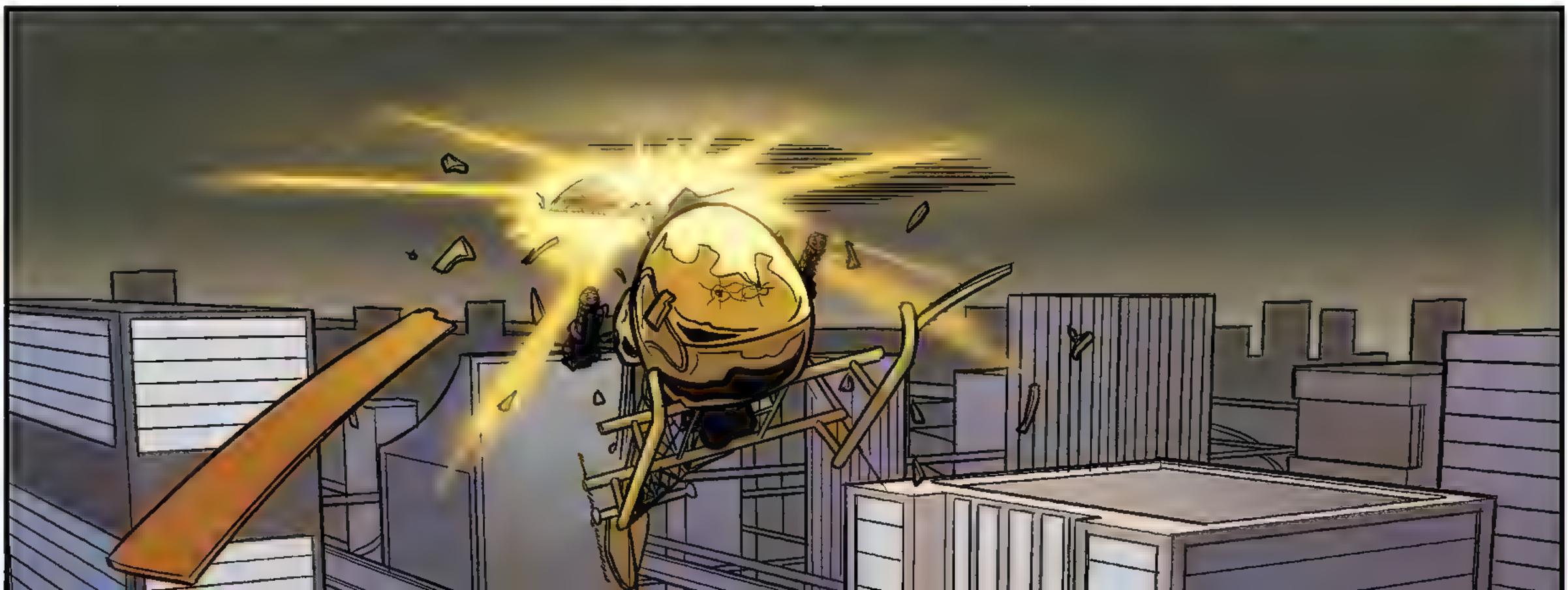
OH, JUST TELL ME TO SHUT UP NEXT TIME.

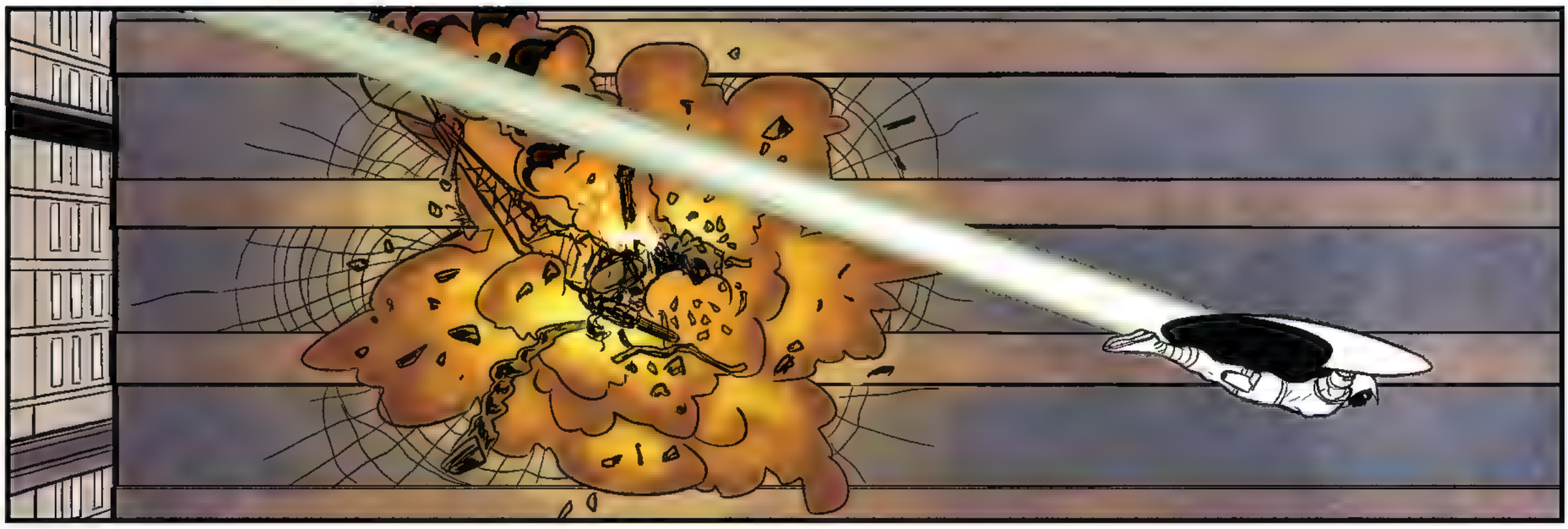




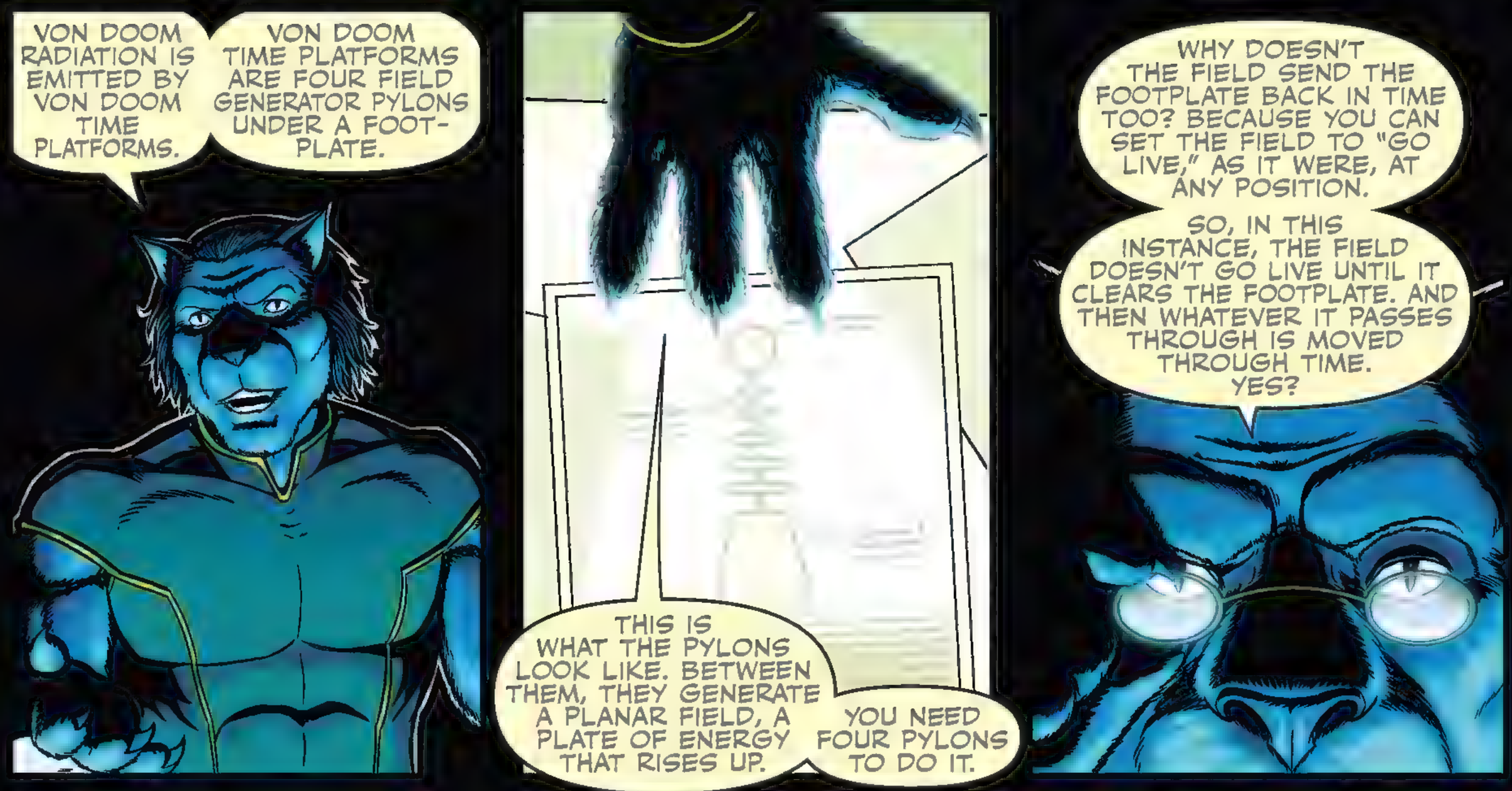








YEAH. I MEANT TO MENTION THE CHOPPERS.
TAKE THE NEXT ASCENT RAMP. THERE'S SOMETHING YOU'RE GOING TO WANT TO SEE.


VON DOOM RADIATION IS EMITTED BY VON DOOM TIME PLATFORMS.
VON DOOM TIME PLATFORMS ARE FOUR FIELD GENERATOR PYLONS UNDER A FOOT-PLATE.
THIS IS WHAT THE PYLONS LOOK LIKE. BETWEEN THEM, THEY GENERATE A PLANAR FIELD, A PLATE OF ENERGY THAT RISES UP.
YOU NEED FOUR PYLONS TO DO IT.
WHY DOESN'T THE FIELD SEND THE FOOTPLATE BACK IN TIME TOO? BECAUSE YOU CAN SET THE FIELD TO "GO LIVE," AS IT WERE, AT ANY POSITION.
SO, IN THIS INSTANCE, THE FIELD DOESN'T GO LIVE UNTIL IT CLEARS THE FOOTPLATE. AND THEN WHATEVER IT PASSES THROUGH IS MOVED THROUGH TIME. YES?

DAMN.

WHY IN HELL IS IT SO BIG?

BECAUSE THERE ARE GOING TO BE THREE MORE, AREN'T THERE? ON OPPOSITE CORNERS OF THIS CITY.

IT'S GOING TO BE A VON DOOM FIELD TWO MILES ACROSS.

AND IT'S GOING TO BE SO BIG AND POWERFUL THAT IT'S GOING TO GO RIGHT UP THROUGH THE SHELL OVER THIS CITY AND THROUGH A MILE OF DIRT AND GO LIVE AT GROUND LEVEL IN CINCINNATI.

IN THE AFTERMATH, CINCINNATI WILL LOOK DELETED. JUST SMOOTHLY ERASED FROM THE EARTH.

AND THAT'S NOT THE WORST OF IT. KICKING THE PLACE LOOSE IN TIME TURNS IT INTO A BOMB. THEY COULD PUT IT ANYWHERE.

ON TOP OF ANOTHER CITY. DROP IT ON A SMALL COUNTRY FROM THREE MILES UP.

IF WE TAKE ONE PYLON OUT, THE FIELD CAN'T FORM.

DRIVE, NATASHA.

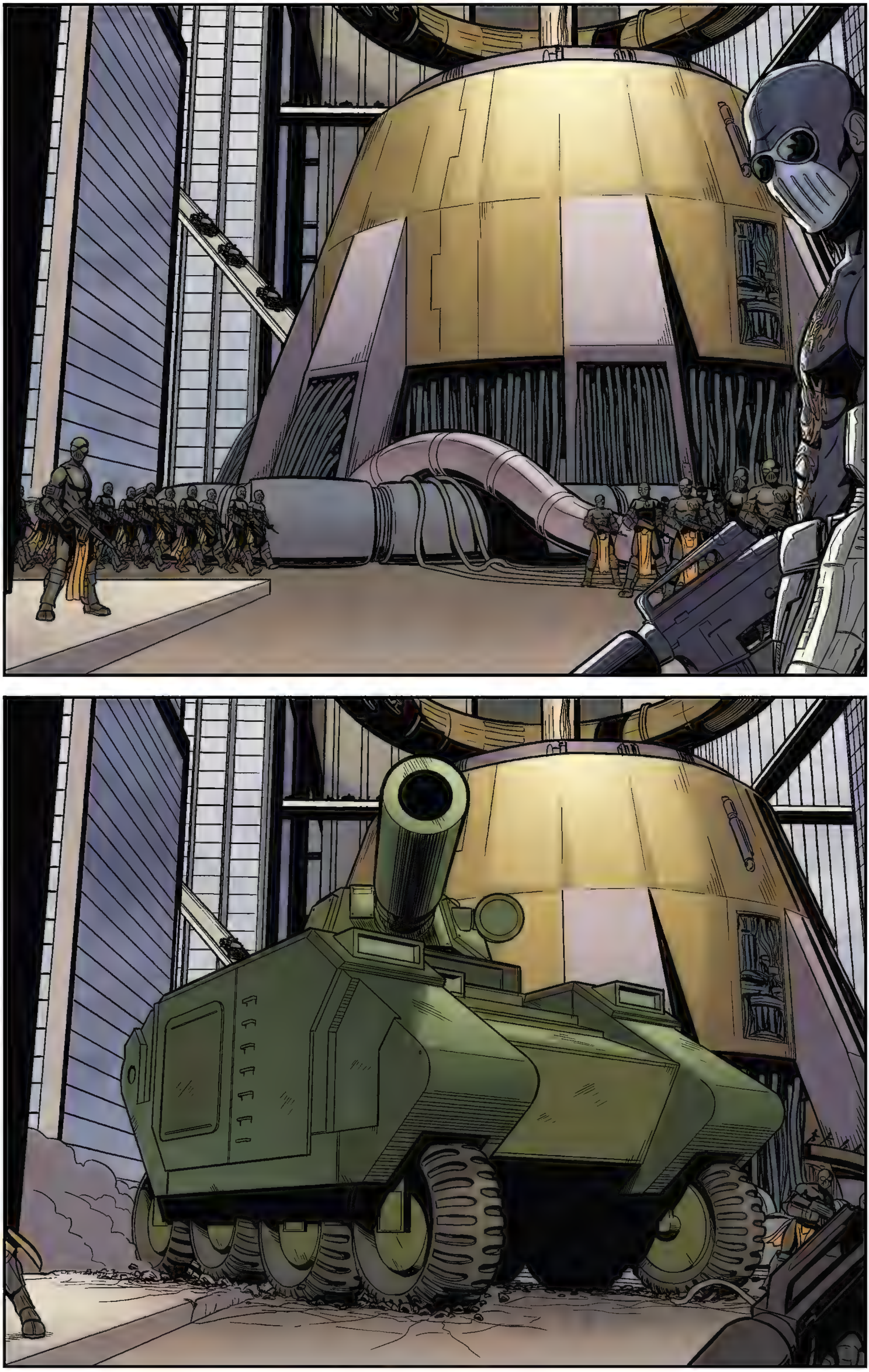
THE THING'S EVEN GOT A WIRELESS POWER FEED. I COULD SEE IT FROM HERE. THERE COULD BE A DOZEN REACTORS AROUND HERE FEEDING ALL OF THE PYLONS.

IT'S CLEVER AND INSANE AT THE SAME TIME. THEY COULD ISSUE ANY DEMANDS THEY WANTED AFTERWARDS, AND NO ONE WOULD KNOW THEY COULDN'T PULL THE SAME TRICK TWICE.

STAY FOCUSED. I WANT OPTIONS FOR DESTROYING THIS PYLON AS SOON AS WE GET A GOOD LOOK AT ITS BASE.

FRONTAL ASSAULT. HIT THEM FAST, USE THEIR PANIC AGAINST THEM.

NICE AND SIMPLE.



OKAY, HOW ABOUT A PLAN B?

охренеть

THEY'RE POWERING UP THE PYLONS. THE FIELD'S GOING TO FORM IN MINUTES.

HENRY, YOU KNOW MORE ABOUT THIS THAN ANY OF US. GIVE ME A PLAN.

THERE IS SOMETHING I CAN DO.

IT IS, IN FACT, HORRIBLY EASY.

WHAT?

I CAN TURN THIS CAR INTO A FISSILE BOMB. A NASTY ONE.

YOU MEAN LIKE A DIRTY BOMB?

I MEAN LIKE AN ENHANCED RADIATION TACTICAL DEVICE. LIKE A SMALL, LOW-RENT NEUTRON BOMB.

I CAN'T BLOW UP THE ENTIRE CITY TO GET ALL THE TIME PLATFORM STRUTS.

BUT I CAN MAKE AN ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE THAT SHOULD FRY IT. AND A BURST OF RADIATION THAT'LL INSTANTLY KILL EVERYONE DOWN HERE, GOD HELP ME.

INCLUDING US.

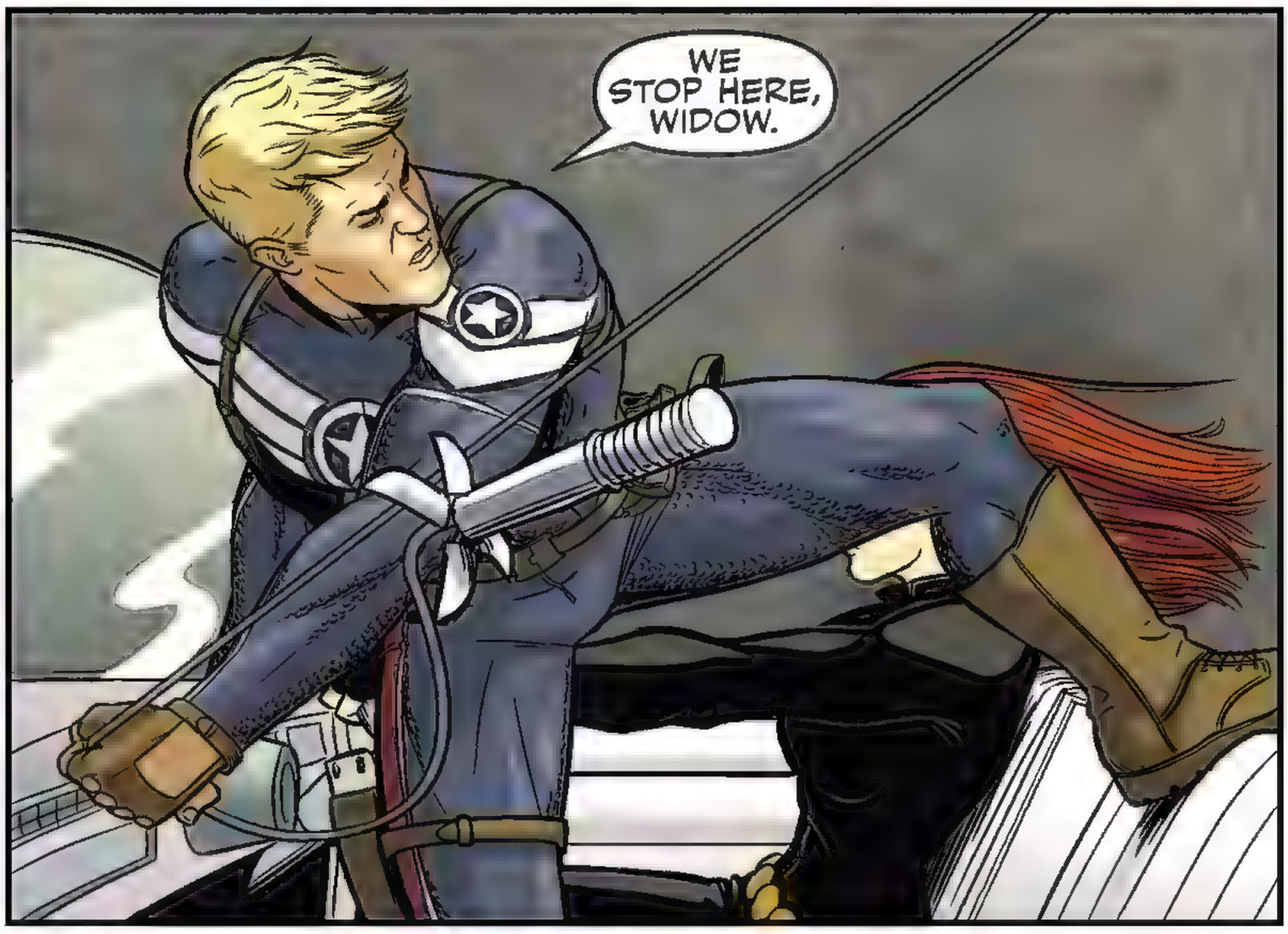
WHAT IF WE COULD GET BACK TO OUR ENTRANCE POINT?

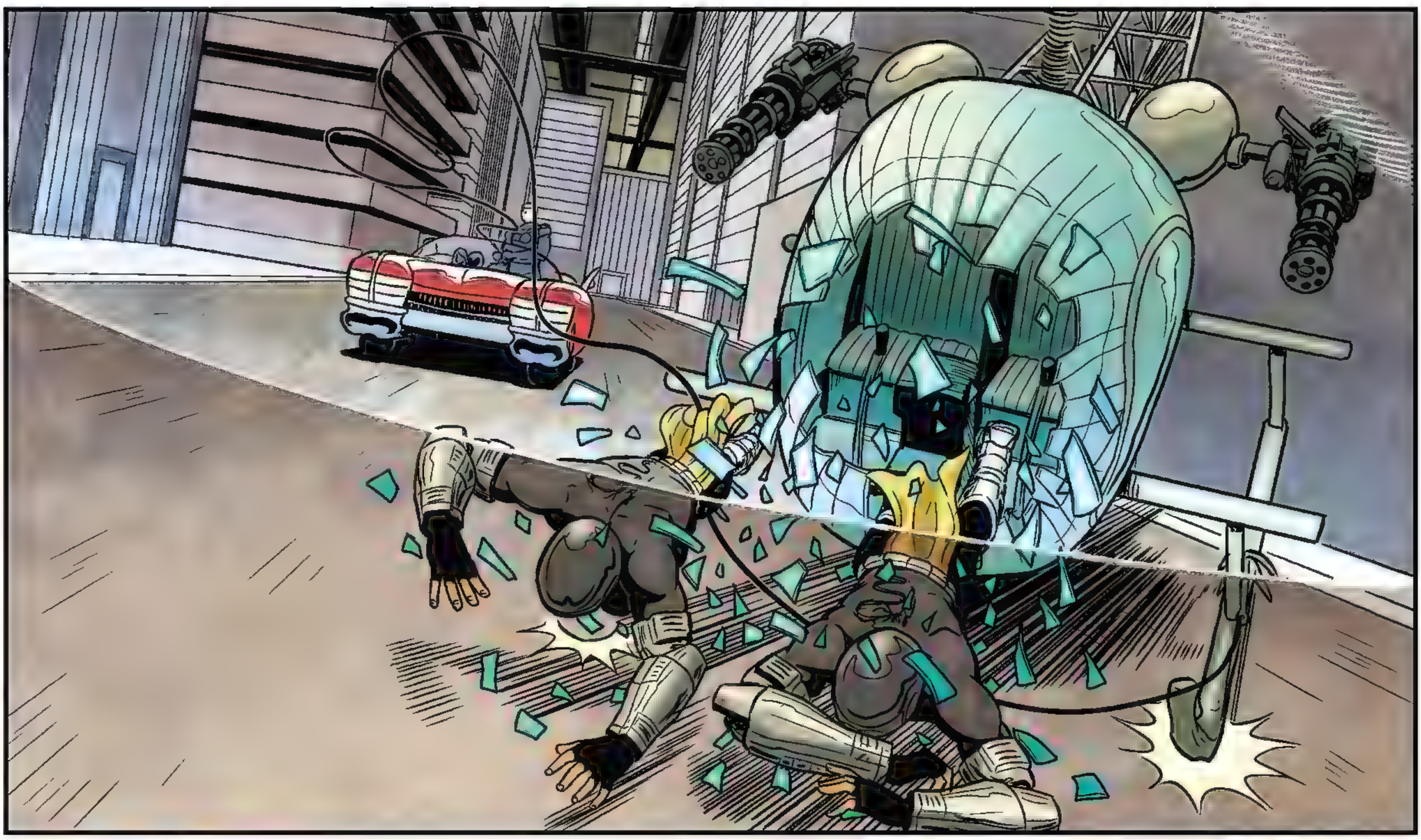
THE "SKY" ABOVE THIS CITY IS AT LEAST THREE FEET OF DENSE METALS. AND THERE'S A MILE OF DIRT BETWEEN THIS SPOT AND CINCINNATI.

IF WE CAN MAKE IT BACK TO OUR EXIT, THEN...

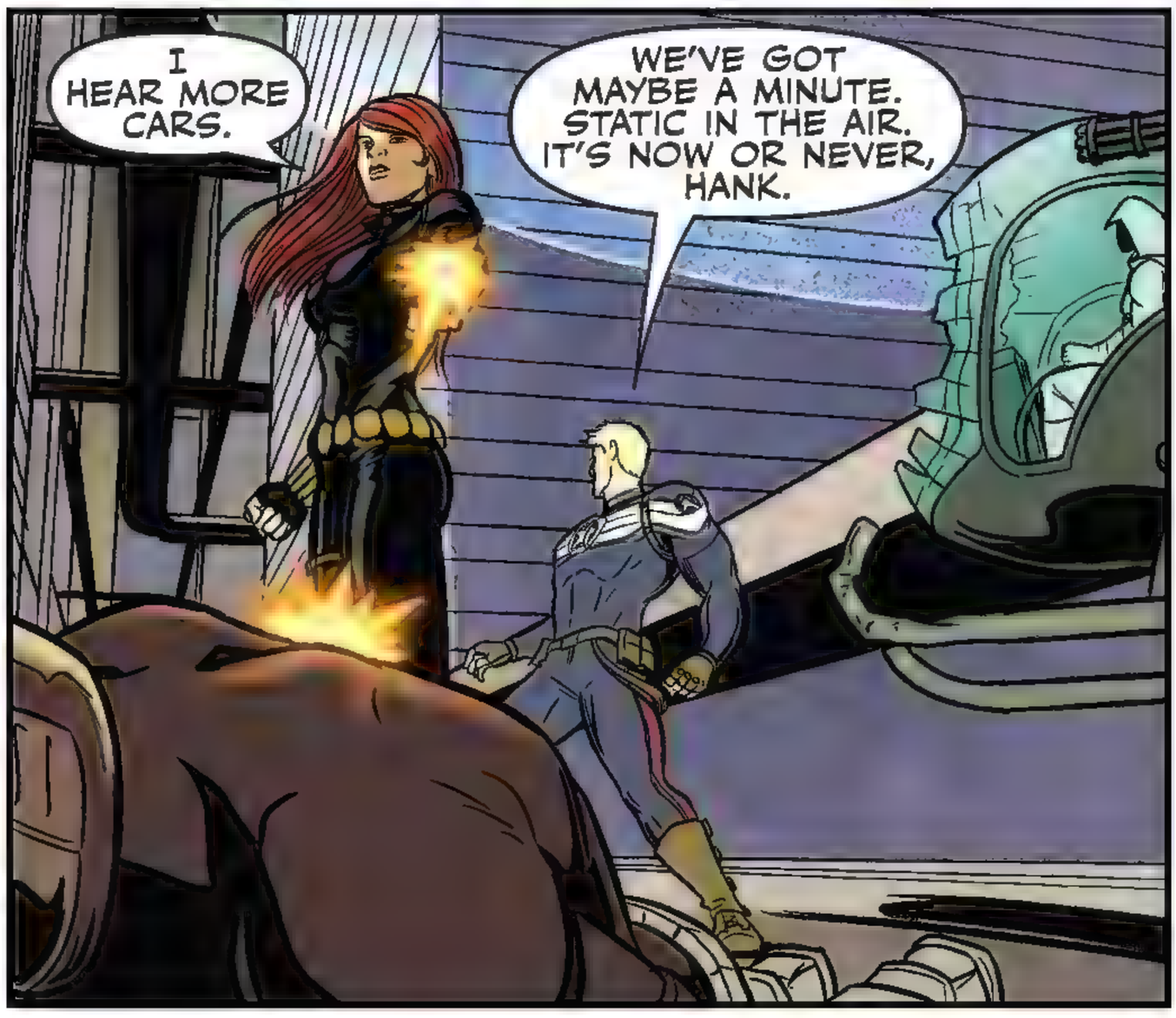
...THEN THE MECHANICAL SYSTEM WILL STILL WORK AFTER THE BOMB GOES OFF BECAUSE IT'S NOT ELECTRONIC.

MOON KNIGHT. YOUR TRUNCHEON.


WE STOP HERE, WIDOW.



INSANE.
I'M MAKING A NEUTRON BOMB OUT OF AN ATOMIC CONVERTIBLE.


I HEAR MORE CARS.
WE'VE GOT MAYBE A MINUTE. STATIC IN THE AIR. IT'S NOW OR NEVER, HANK.

DONE.

THAT QUICK?

TERRIFYING, ISN'T IT? THE THING WAS A ROLLING BOMB TO START OFF WITH. AM I RIDING INSIDE?

MOON KNIGHT!

=MMNNN=

RELAX. I'M FAR TOO BORDERLINE PSYCHOTIC TO FEEL PAIN.

NEARLY THERE ANYWAY.

ACTUALLY, I MIGHT PASS OUT.

I'M SORRY I SAID YOU WERE INSANE.

I STILL MIGHT PASS OUT.

MOVE!

HOW LONG, HANK?

...IT SHOULD HAVE ALREADY GONE OFF. LOOK AT THE PLANAR FIELD FORMING UP...

HOW MANY PEOPLE DID I JUST KILL?

HOW MANY PEOPLE DID YOU JUST SAVE?

YOU'RE A CLEVER MAN. DO THE MATH. IT'LL HELP YOU SLEEP.

17

“BEAST BOX”

THIS FOOTAGE COMES FROM SERBIA.

THE WHOLE FORMER YUGOSLAVIAN REGION IS STILL NOT IN GREAT SHAPE.

A LOT OF REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS, A LOT OF VILLAGES OUTSIDE THE INFRASTRUCTURE... A LOT OF DARK AREAS.

WHO SHOT THIS?

A BRIT. MI:13 PLACED AN AGENT INSIDE THE KOSOVAN PEACE-KEEPING FORCE. SHE FOLLOWED RUMORS ABOUT ABANDONED VILLAGES.

SO HOW'D SHE GET OUT?

SHE'S A TELEPORTER. DAMN NEAR KILLED HERSELF JUMPING BACK TO BRITAIN IN STAGES TO RUSH THE FOOTAGE BACK, APPARENTLY.

ELECTRO-MAGNETIC LEVITATION FIELDS. KIND OF OLD-SCHOOL.

"OLD-SCHOOL" IS CRACKING SOMEONE OVER THE HEAD AND DRAGGING 'EM OUT BY THEIR FEET. THIS IS SOMETHING ELSE.

SO, WHEN THE AGENT GOT BACK TO LONDON...

...SHE FOUND OUT THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS DIALING BACK ITS INVOLVEMENT IN THE REGION AND REALLY DIDN'T CARE IF SHE'D FILMED HITLER'S GHOST EATING BABIES.

THIS CAME TO US THROUGH A SERIES OF BACK-CHANNELS.

SHOULD I GUESS WHY?

NO ONE WANTS TO PUT MORE RESOURCES INTO THE REGION, NO ONE WANTS TO DESTABILIZE WHAT'S BEEN ACHIEVED THERE...

...EVERYONE WOULD LIKE A MASS ABDUCTION PROGRAM TAKEN CARE OF SECRETLY. RIGHT.

HOW OLD IS THE TAKE AT THIS POINT?

THREE DAYS. WE HAVE THE LOCATION, AND THE LOCATIONS OF THE OTHER REPORTED "ABANDONED" VILLAGES. SO WE CAN DRAW A LINE.

BUT THE TAKE'S THREE DAYS OLD. I WANT QUINCARRIER ZERO READY TO ROLL.

REALLY? THE OLDER, SMALLER ONE? I KIND OF WANT SOME HEAVY FIREPOWER HERE...

IT'S FASTER. THE TAKE IS THREE DAYS OLD. AND THAT THING'S ON THE ROAD.

YOU, ME, VALKYRIE, WAR MACHINE.

WE MOVE NOW.

ANYTHING YET, SHARON?

NOT A THING. WHERE ARE RHODEY AND VALKYRIE?

IN THE LOWER MAGAZINE. RHODEY'S CLEANING HIS GUNS AND VAL'S WATCHING HIM LIKE HE'S A CAVEMAN SCRAPING HIDE. YOU KNOW ASGARDIANS.

STEVE, HOW IS NO ONE NOTICING THIS THING?

NOT VERY WELL, NO.

FOREIGN FORCES ARE PULLING OUT OF THE REGION. LESS OVER-FLYING, FEWER VEHICLES ON THE GROUND, REDUCED INTEL...

SO THIS THING'S TOOLING AROUND THE BACKROADS OF EASTERN EUROPE AND THERE'S NEVER EVEN BEEN SATELLITE TAKE? NO ONE'S EVER BUMPED INTO IT?

I DON'T TRUST IT.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

UNVERIFIED CAPTURE

I'VE BEEN POINTING SCANNERS AND CAMERAS AT THE GROUND. THIS MEANS THE SYSTEM'S FOUND SOMETHING IT CAN'T QUITE MAKE SENSE OF.

IS THAT IT?

THE SYSTEM'S COMBINING THE SCANNER IMAGES WITH OPTICAL CAMERA IMAGES.

THE ELECTRONIC SCANNING IS SAYING IT ISN'T THERE, THE CAMERAS ARE INSISTING IT IS.

THIS IS HOW THE DAMN THING'S GOING UNNOTICED. IT'S FITTED WITH MASSIVE DIGITAL SURVEILLANCE COUNTERMEASURES. A SAT WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO SEE IT.

HUH. DOESN'T EXPLAIN HOW NO ONE'S REPORTED BUMPING INTO IT, THOUGH.

YES! PILOT MARKO SHOOTS STUPID YANKEE ZILLION-DOLLAR PLANE RIGHT IN ITS STUPID BLUDDY FACE!

WHERE IS YOUR BLUDDY STEVE JOBS TRICKNOLOGY NOW, RICH YANKEE PIGS WITH YOUR TIGHT PANTS?

AND IT MUST'VE SCANNED US FIRST! THAT STRIKE CUT OUT OUR WEAPONS SYSTEMS, SURGICALLY!

THAT'S HOW! AERIAL ESCORT! ELECTRONICALLY CLOAKED TOO, AND MY CAMERAS WERE POINTED AT THE DAMN *GROUND!*

STAY ON MISSION. WHAT CAN WE DO WITHOUT WEAPONS?

THERE'S ONE THING WE CAN DO. ONE THING THIS QUINCARRIER HAS THAT THE MAIN ONE DOESN'T.

EXTREME SEPARATION PROTOCOL.

YOU'RE CRAZY.

STEVE, THERE'S GROUND TRANSPORT FOR YOU STORED IN THE MIDSECTION'S LOWER MAGAZINE. KEEP EVERYONE DOWN THERE.

I'LL BE FINE! GO!

EVERYONE STAY IN THE LOWER DECK OF THE MIDSECTION! THIS IS A COMBAT SEPARATION EVENT!

WHAT MEANS "COMBAT SEPARATION"?

MAGNIFICENT.

THAT WE'RE PROBABLY GOING TO DIE IN A FIREBALL.

THE WORST THING IS THAT I KNOW YOU'RE NOT BEING SARCASTIC.

THEY'RE COMING AROUND FOR ANOTHER PASS.

YOU'VE GOT TEN SECONDS TO GET CLEAR OF ALL LOCKPORTS AND FRAME SEALS.

AND THAT'S FOUR...

...THREE...

...TWO...

...WE HAVE SEPARATION.

MIDSECTION IS NOMINAL FOR POWERED LANDING.

ENGINE SECTION IS ON GUIDANCE. BRACE FOR THE SHOCKWAVE.

THEY THROW BLUDDY AIRPLANE BUM AT PILOT MARKO?

MOVE OUT.

ARAGORN!

STEVE, I CALLED HOME BASE-- HANK'S EN ROUTE WITH QUINCARRIER ONE. WHICH I GUESS IS NOW QUINCARRIER ONLY.

WAR MACHINE, I'M GOING TO NEED YOU TO RUN THE CLEANER PROTOCOL ON THE MIDSECTION...

COPY THAT. STARTING CLEANER PROTOCOL LOCALLY. THE CLOCK IS RUNNING.

WEAPONS CLEAR. REPULSOR DRIVE START. MAIN SYSTEMS START.

WAR MACHINE LAUNCH.

COMMANDER ROGERS TO ALL POINTS: I HAVE THE TARGET IN VISUAL.

STAY CLEAR OF THE SIDE PORTS. DO NOT STRIKE OR FIRE UPON THE CONTAINER. IT MAY CONTAIN CIVILIANS. WE WANT THE DRIVER.

AND WE WANT THE DRIVER *ALIVE.*

I WILL ACCEPT "DAMAGED."

VALKYRIE: GIVE THE DRIVER A GOOD REASON TO STAND ON HIS BRAKES.

WAR MACHINE! COVERAGE!

AIR CAV.

WHOOP--

VAL! WHERE ARE YOU?

--DAMN SLOPPY--

HERE.

ALERT! SONIC ATTACK. 0.8 KM DISTANT. 25 KHZ.

SYSTEM QUERY: HUMAN HEARING RANGE.

20 HZ TO 20 KHZ.

SO WHAT HEARS AT *25 KHZ?*

ARAGORN! WHAT IS HAPPENING? BE STILL!

EXAWATT HYDROGEN MASER.

FIRING.

OH, HELL.

OKAY, SO LET ME TRY THIS AGAIN...

AH, FOR...

CAN WE *PLEASE* GET OUR ACT TOGETHER?

I SAID ALIVE.

THEN WE SHOULD HAVE SHOWED UP A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO. THIS GUY WAS JUST A MEAT ROBOT.

LINKING INTO THE ONBOARD COMPUTER. WE SHOULD KNOW WHERE THIS THING CAME FROM IN A COUPLE OF MINUTES.

THIS IS WHERE THEY CAME FROM? A FACTORY? WHAT'S IN THERE? ARE THE PEOPLE OKAY?

DON'T GO IN THERE.

WHY NOT? ARE THE PEOPLE OKAY?

RHODEY HAD TO CALL STARK, IN THE END, AND SHOW HIM VIDEO.

STARK THINKS IT'S SOME KIND OF BIO-COMPUTER. SEVERAL HUNDRED HUMAN BRAINS RIGGED IN PARALLEL. CAN'T SAVE THEM. THE BODIES ARE...DON'T GO IN THERE.

LOOKS TO ME LIKE AN OLD A.I.M. INSTALLATION, TAKEN OVER BY SOMEONE ELSE.

WHO? WAS THERE ANYONE IN THERE?

ONE OVERSEER. SAID "OH, BLOODY HELL" AND SHOT HIMSELF THROUGH THE BRAIN.

DISTINCTLY ENGLISH ACCENT.

I'M GUESSING OUR "BACKCHANNELS" DIDN'T INVOLVE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

18

SECRET AVENGERS

"NO ZONE"

COMMANDER ROGERS TO SHANG-CHI.

SHIFT TO EXTREME COMBAT PROTOCOL WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT.

INCAPACITATE ALL COMERS, PROCEED TO ZERO POINT.

"INCAPACITATE."

K-1A-84

WE'RE IN A SEALED BOX, SHANG.

IF YOU JUST KNOCK THEM DOWN, THEY'LL GET UP AGAIN AND BACK US INTO A CORNER.

YES.

"YES"? WHAT DOES "YES" MEAN?

EEEEEGGHH

K-1Я-8Ч

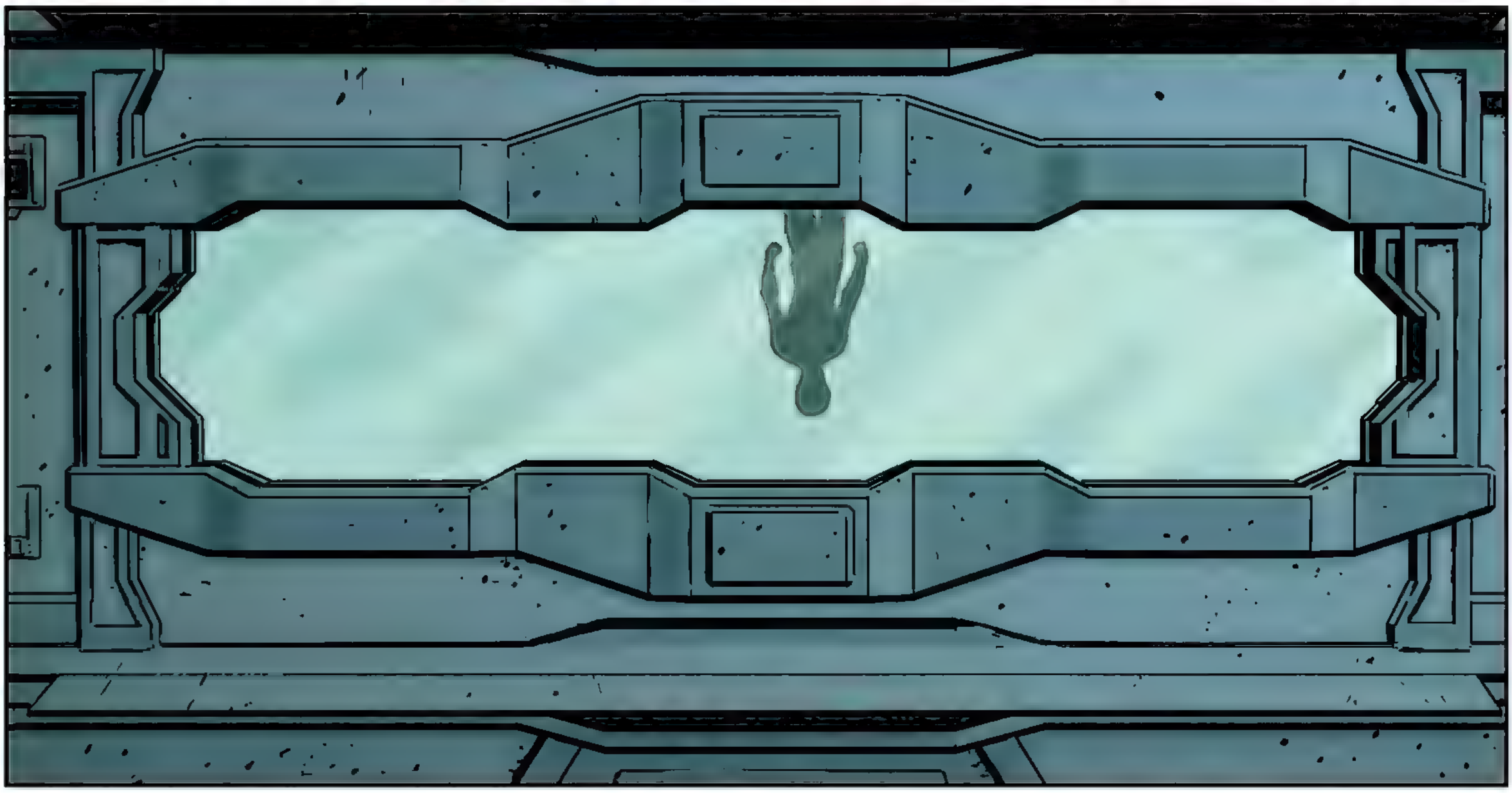
AAAAAA

AOWWW GOD

KRAKK

NNGGGAAA

HAL



I'VE REVIEWED THE MATERIAL. I'M NOT AN EXPERT IN THIS FIELD, BUT I AM, SHALL WE SAY, SHALLOWLY VERSED IN IT.

THE MULTIVERSE IS A LIVING STRUCTURE. ENTIRE NEW UNIVERSES BUBBLE OFF OF IT EVERY DAY.

NOT ALL OF THEM HAVE A PERFECT BIG BANG. SOME EMERGE BROKEN OR MALFORMED. THESE ARE CALLED BAD CONTINUA.

THE NEGATIVE ZONE FAMOUSLY DISCOVERED BY REED RICHARDS, FOR EXAMPLE, IS A BAD CONTINUUM.

THE NEGATIVE ZONE IS VERY BIG. OTHER BAD CONTINUA CAN BE ONLY A COUPLE OF HUNDRED MILES ACROSS.

THEY ARE NOTABLE FOR FLAWS IN THE LAWS OF PHYSICS.

A BAD CONTINUUM MIGHT HAVE GRAVITY, FOR INSTANCE, BUT WATER WILL BOIL THERE AT TEN DEGREES, OR FROZEN WATER WILL TURN INTO MUSIC INSTEAD OF ICE.

THE MATERIAL INSIDE A BAD CONTINUUM WILL ALWAYS ADHERE TO THE PHYSICS THAT WERE LOCAL TO IT, EVEN IF TAKEN TO ANOTHER UNIVERSE.

WE CALL THIS TRANSMATTER.

"YES"? WHAT DOES "YES" MEAN?

IT'S SHANG-CHI, STEVE. A MAN OF FEWER WORDS EVEN THAN YOU. WHAT CAN YOU HEAR?

BONES BREAKING. I GUESS WE'RE STILL GOOD.

GOD, I'VE NOT OFTEN WISHED MORE FOR A GUN...

THE STATION HULL IS TOO THIN, SHARON. EVEN THE FLECHETTE GUNS WOULD--

I KNOW, I KNOW. STILL, I'M GLAD I BROUGHT THIS ALONG.

IS THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?

LITTLE SOUVENIR FROM THE OLD DAYS AT S.H.I.E.L.D.

THE SHADOW COUNCIL ARE MINING TRANSMATTER IN A BAD CONTINUUM. THIS TRANSMATTER, IT SEEMS, CAN BE ELECTROLYZED INTO NUCLEAR FUSION.

A TWO-GALLON CAN OF TRANSMATTER, WHEN SUBJECTED TO A CHILD'S CHEMISTRY EXPERIMENT, COULD VERY EASILY STELLIFY EARTH.

STELLIFY?

TURN EARTH INTO A SUN.

AS DOOMSDAY MACHINES GO, IT IS HORRIBLY ULTIMATE AND DEPRESSINGLY SIMPLE.

YOU'RE GOING TO NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT AN INTRAMULTIVERSAL DROPSHIP, COMMANDER.

HOW DID WE EVEN GET THIS MATERIAL?

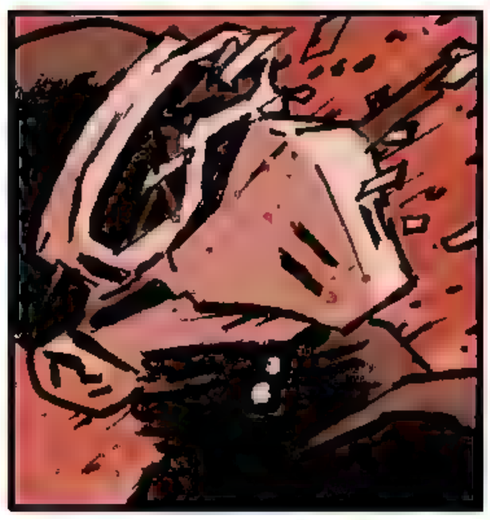
AN EX-S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENT I KNEW. HE INFILTRATED THE SHADOW COUNCIL ALONE, AND OFFERED ME INFORMATION IN RETURN FOR SAFE EXFILTRATION.

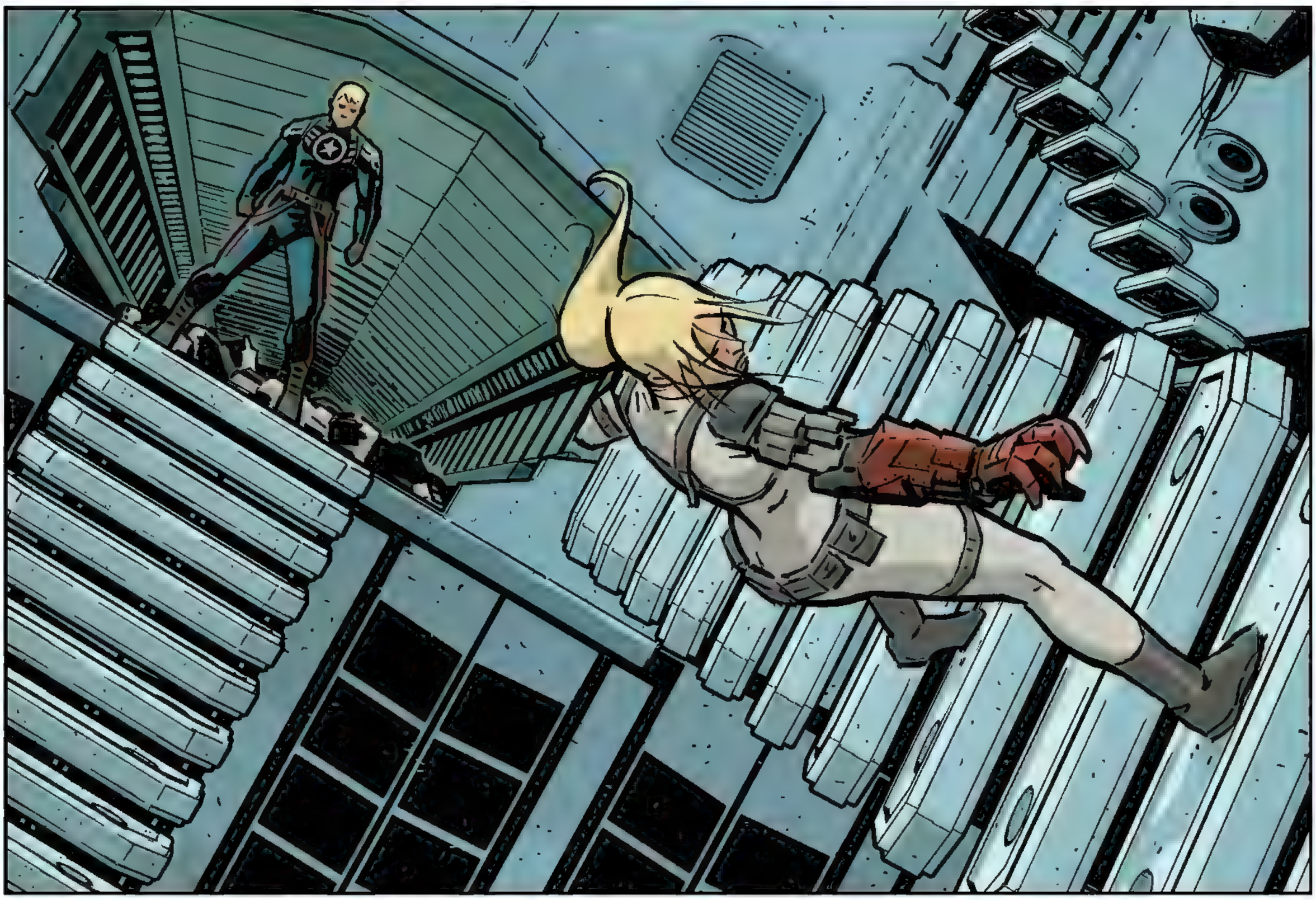
KNEW?

HE WAS FOUND IN EIGHT PIECES ON AN OREGON BEACH. BUT THE DATACHIP WAS INTACT.

NEVER LET ME PLAY SPYMASTER AGAIN.

SATAN CLAW!





STEVE, DO YOU COPY? THIS PLACE IS A TANGLE. HURTS MY EYES JUST LOOKING AT IT. WE'RE LOSING CRUCIAL TIME HERE...

HELL.

I LOVE YOU.

AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE SHANG-CHI IS IN RELATION TO--

--OH. WAIT.

ASSUME WE'VE LOST THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE.

WITH RESPECT, COMMANDER. YOU SAID TO INCAPACITATE THEM.

YOU DO NOT BRUSH A REED TO THE GROUND IF YOU WANT IT TO STAY OUT OF YOUR PATH.

YOU SNAP IT.

I CAME TO AID YOU IN A MISSION OF STEALTH, EXTRACTION AND HONOR AVENGED.

I RESENT BEING MADE YOUR THUG.

AND WE STILL HAVE NOT SEEN YOUR MINING OPERATION, NOR A FLIGHT DECK.

SHANG, BEHIND YOU.

I KNOW. I WILL DEAL WITH THEM. YOU WILL FIND WHAT WE CAME TO FIND.

LET HIM WORK, STEVE. WE'RE OUT OF TIME. WE NEED TO FIND THE FLIGHT DECK BEFORE THEY SHIP THE TRANSMATTER BACK HOME.

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT...

GOD, WHATEVER HE'S DOING SOUNDS HORRIBLE...

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID LET HIM WORK.

I COULD KICK MYSELF. AVENGERS SURVIVE THROUGH TEAMWORK, AND WE NEVER SEEM TO HAVE ANY.

ACCESS TUBES OF SOME KIND?

UNMARKED. I SUPPOSE WE KNOW NOW WHY YOUR MAN'S BLUEPRINTS DIDN'T SEEM TO MAKE SENSE, BUT THAT'S NOT A HUGE HELP...

WAIT.

AAH! WHERE THE HELL DID YOU--

WAIT.

THIS ONE IS COLDER. IT CONNECTS TO A LARGE SPACE BELOW THIS CORRIDOR THAT IS OPEN TO OUTSIDE CONDITIONS.

FLIGHT DECK.

YOU SEE, SHANG? YOU'RE NOT HERE TO BE ANY KIND OF THUG.

YOU'RE HERE TO BE AN AVENGER.

IS THAT...?

AFFIRMATIVE. ARNIM ZOLA 4.2.3.

COMMANDER, THAT DOES NOT EXPLAIN ANYTHING TO ME.

ARNIM ZOLA. CRAZY MAN WHO BROADCASTS HIS MIND INTO MECHANICAL BODIES.

4.2.3. IS ONE OF HIS PERSONALITY UPDATES THAT GOT LOCKED IN ONE ANDROID BODY. A BROKEN COPY STUCK TO THE MACHINERY.

THE SHADOW COUNCIL ARE GOOD AT RECRUITING BROKEN COPIES OF THINGS.

SO WHAT DO WE DO?

HE'S GOT THE TRANSMATTER. WE'RE OUT OF CHOICES.

WE RUSH THEM. I TAKE HIM. MAKE A HOLE FOR ME.

GO!

START THE ENGINES!

LEVEL-5-T3 ROOK-O

STEVE!

PILOTS! COMMENCE INTRAUNIVERSAL INJECTION!

I WILL DEAL WITH THIS MYSELF!

DID YOU THINK I WOULDN'T KNOW YOU? OR HOW MY DRIVE-FATHER HATED YOU?

AAGGKK

MEAT DEVIL!

I WILL KILL YOU AND BECOME ARNIM ZOLA OS X--

I WILL BURN YOUR WORLD AND LIVE ON THE SURFACE OF A NEW STAR LIKE THE GOD I AM--

I'VE MET GODS.

YOU'RE JUST A BROKEN PHONE.

I HAVE A NEW DESTINATION FOR YOU.

ARGUMENT WOULD BE UNHEALTHY.

SHARON AND SHANG-CHI JUST ARRIVED DOWNSTAIRS IN THE VESSEL I LOANED YOU.

BUT WHERE DID THIS THING COME FROM?

IT'S A SECRET.

19

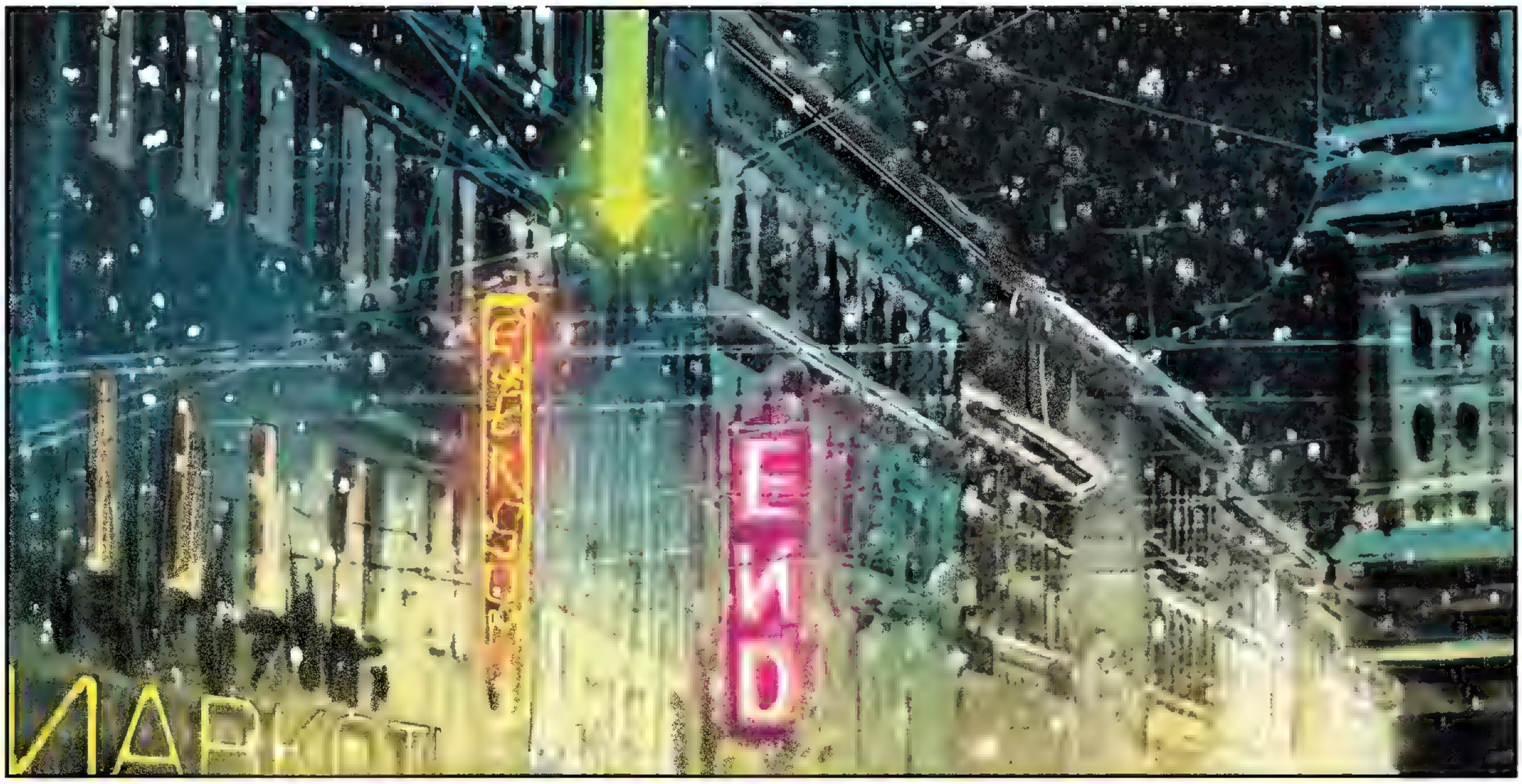
ASTRO CITY

"ANIANA"

SYMKARIA
Population 3 million
Collapsing economy
Crumbling infrastructure
Emergent narcocracy

MOLDOVA
TRANSYLVANIA
HUNGARY
LATVERIA
ROMANIA
SYMKARIA
Aniana
TRANSIA
SERBIA
BULGARIA

CAPITAL CITY: ANIANA


ИДЕАЛ

BUT WE WANT TO SEE VOYDANOI!

VOYDANOI SEES NO ONE.
BUT WHERE IS HE? WE GOT A CALL!
VOYDANOI IS IN THE PENTHOUSE. VOYDANOI DOES NOT MAKE CALLS FROM THE PENTHOUSE. YOU SEE THE PROBLEM.

YEAH, BUT... BUT...

NO BUTS. YOU CAN PARTY HERE. PERHAPS SOMEONE WILL NOTICE YOU AND MENTION YOU TO VOYDANOI.

BUT IF I SEE YOU TAKE ANYTHING BUT FREE DRINKS, YOU WILL BE FOUND IN A DITCH OUTSIDE TOWN WITH NO HEADS. UNDERSTOOD?

UM... WHICH WAY'S THE RESTROOM?

MISTER GRANT.

YES?

WE'RE READY FOR YOU NOW, SIR.

ARKAN CHECKED YOUR BRIEFCASE?

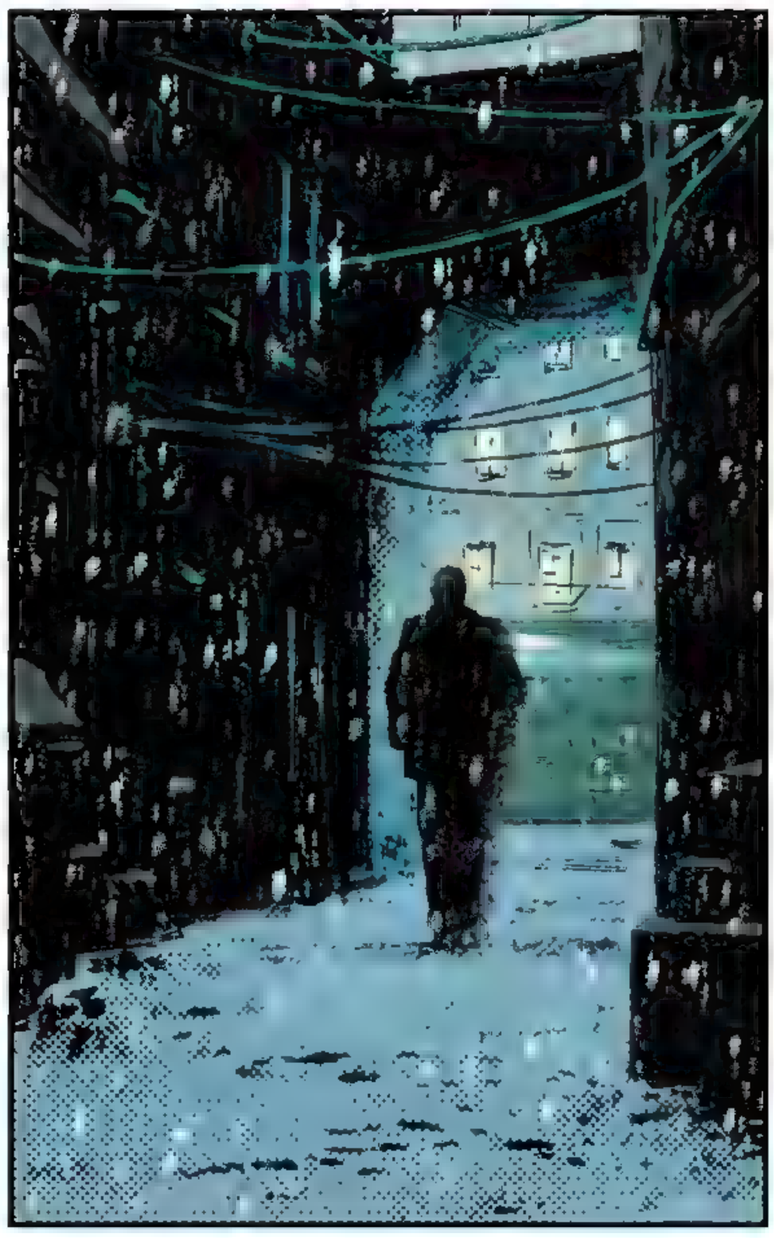
YES, HE DID.

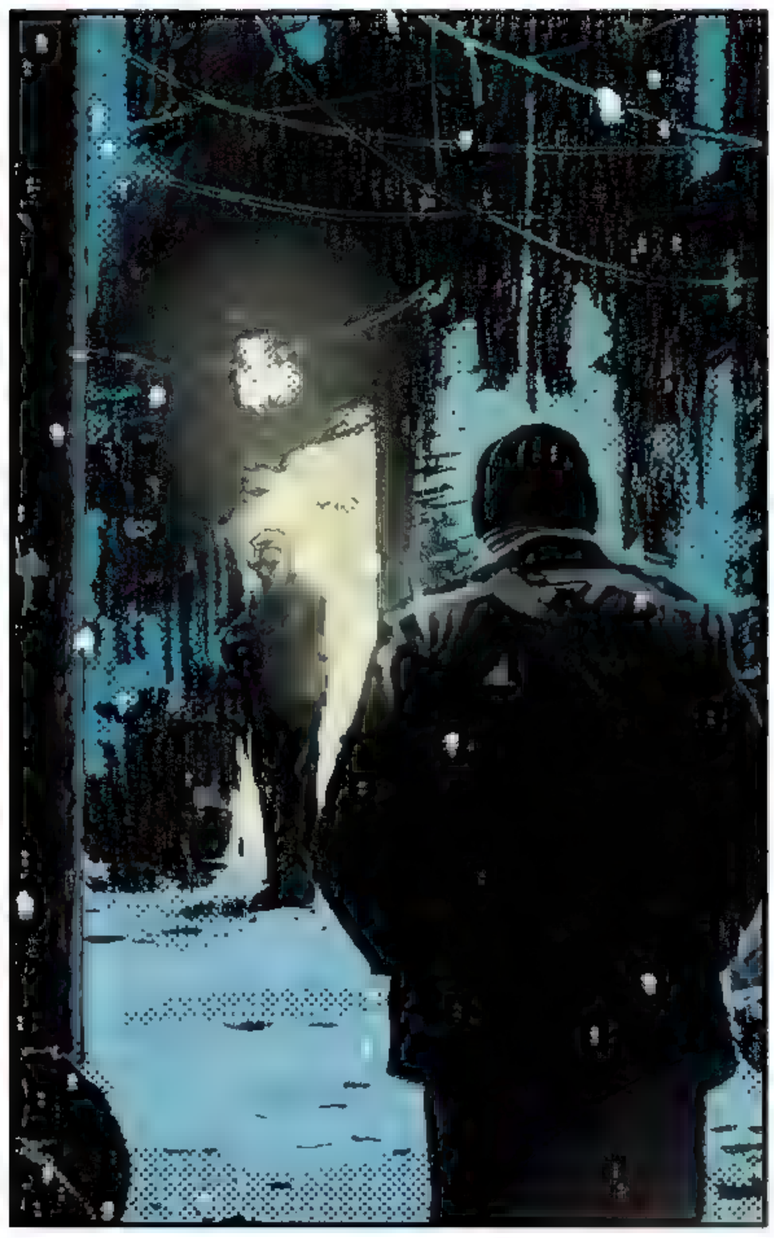
MAY I ASK WHAT YOU ARE CARRYING IN IT?

MONEY. AND TOYS.

I SEE. YOUR SYMKARIAN IS EXCELLENT.

COME THROUGH, COME THROUGH. THE FLOWERS OF ANIANA AWAIT YOUR PLEASURE, MISTER GRANT.

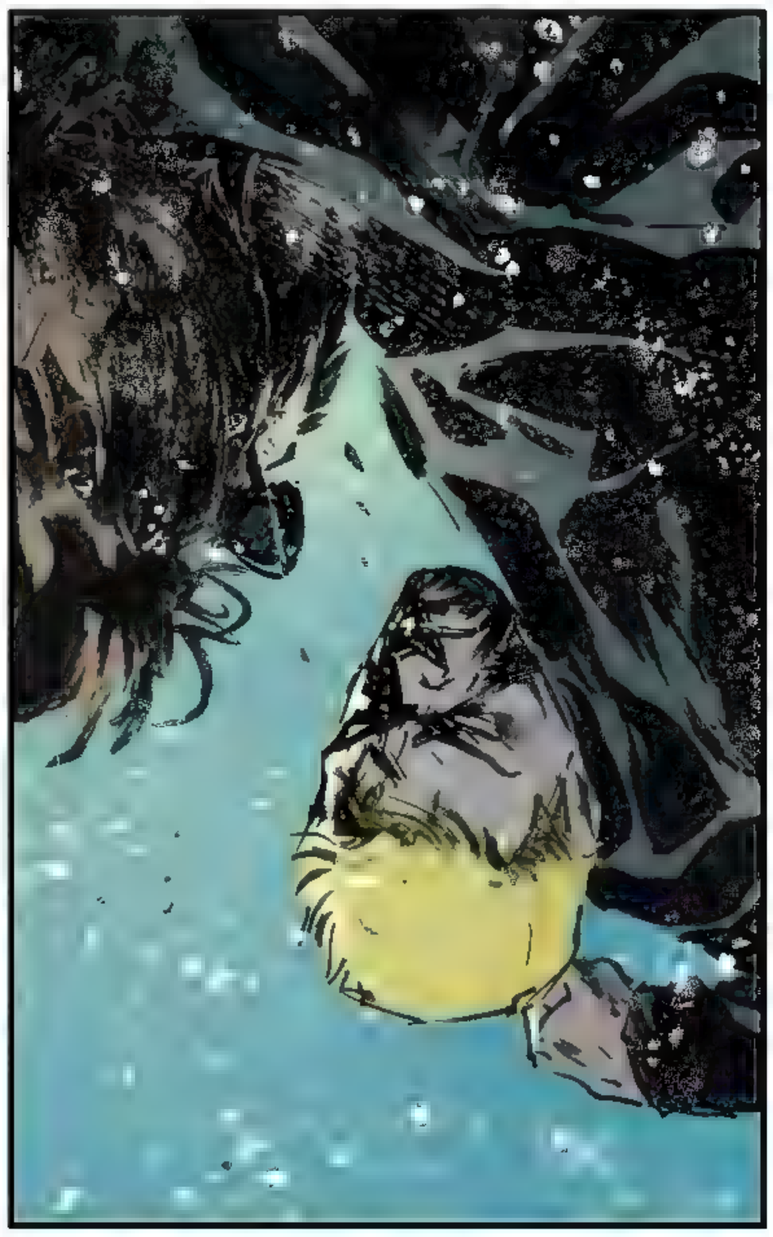


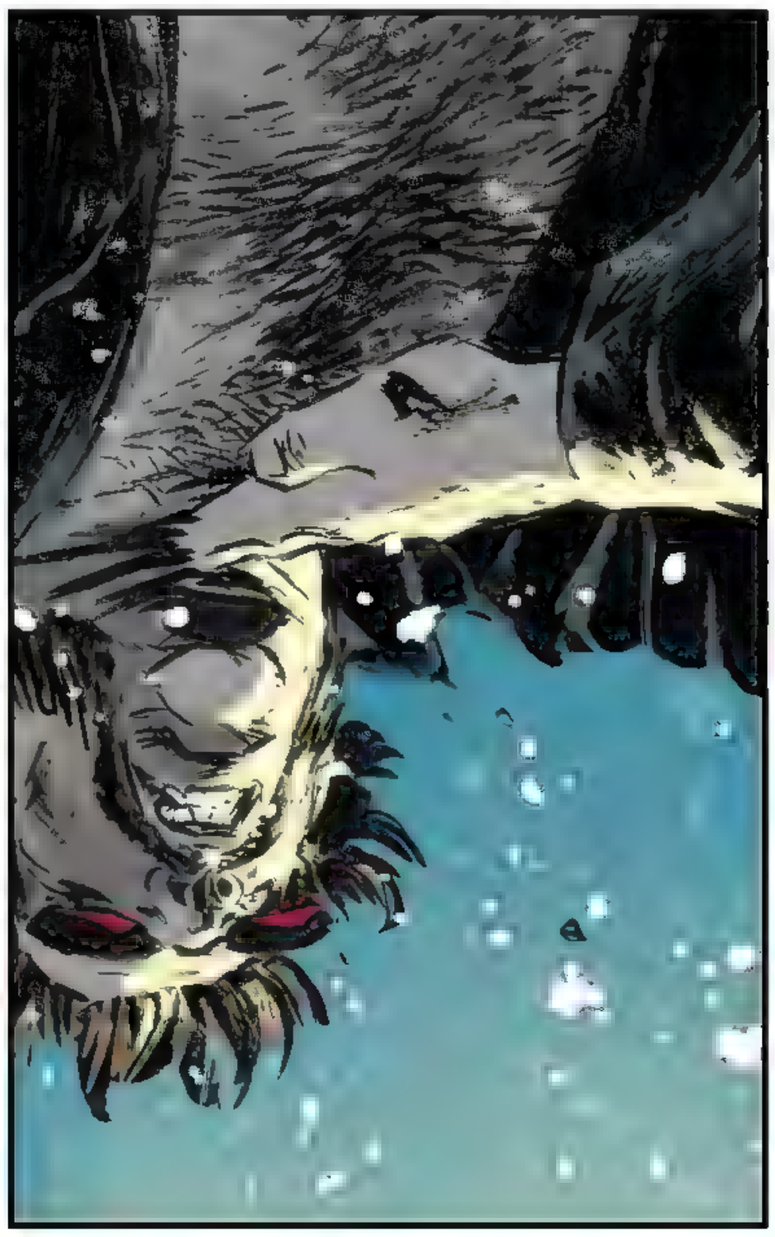


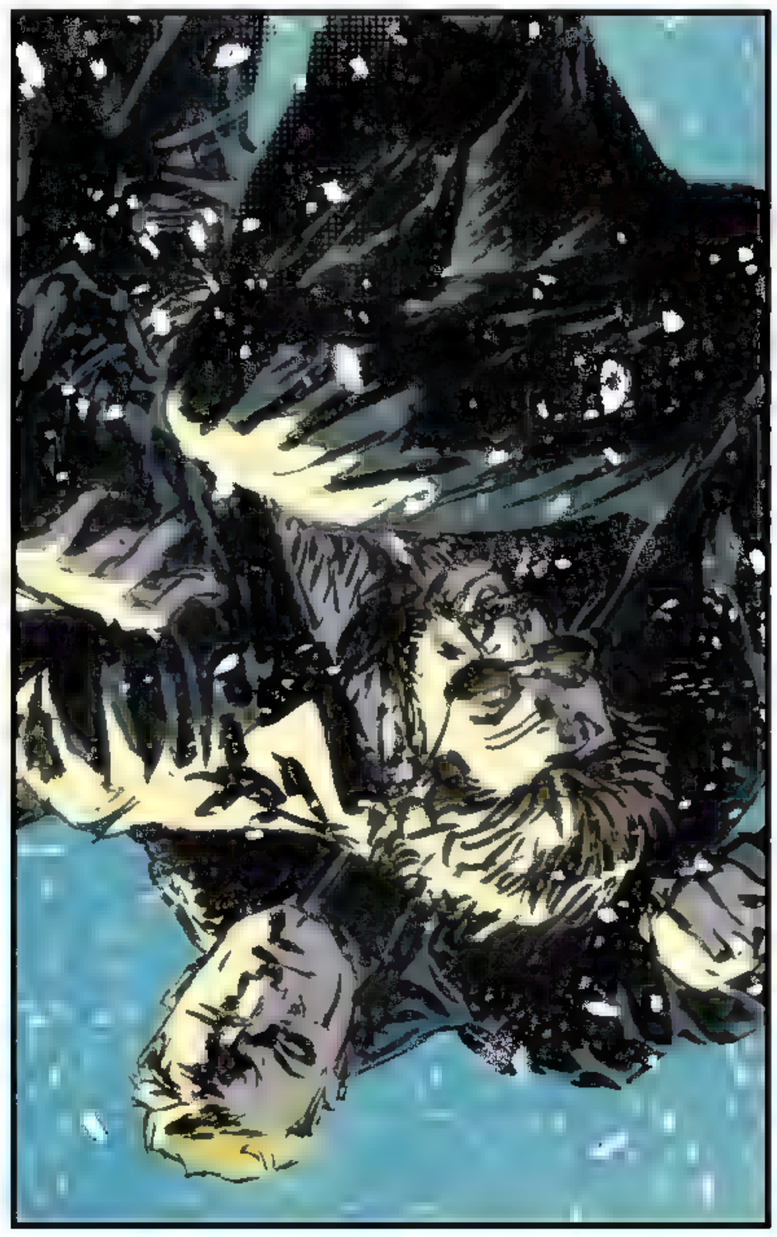
HEY. HEY, YOU.
WHA'?
BACK UP.
THIS IS PRIVATE ACCESS ONLY.

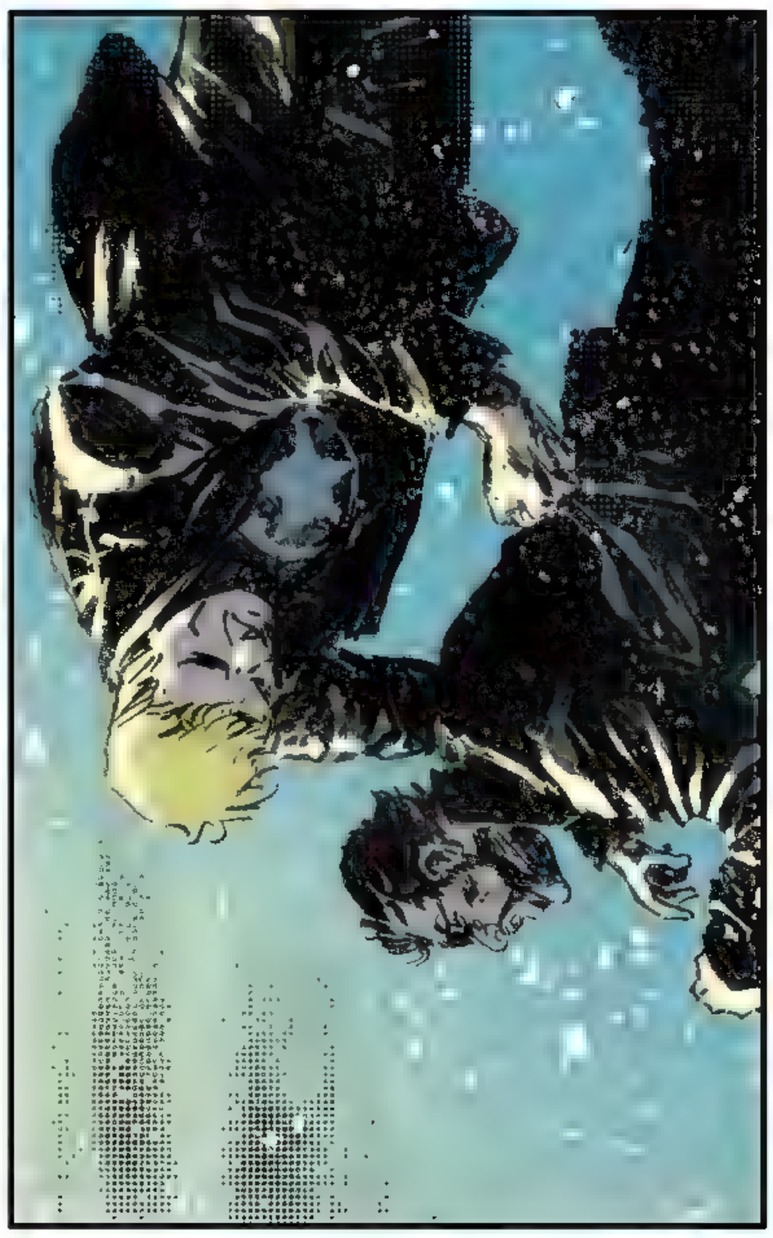
I DON'T...
PRIVATE! YOU GO NOW!
THAT'S ALL THE ENGLISH I KNOW. MOVE OR--

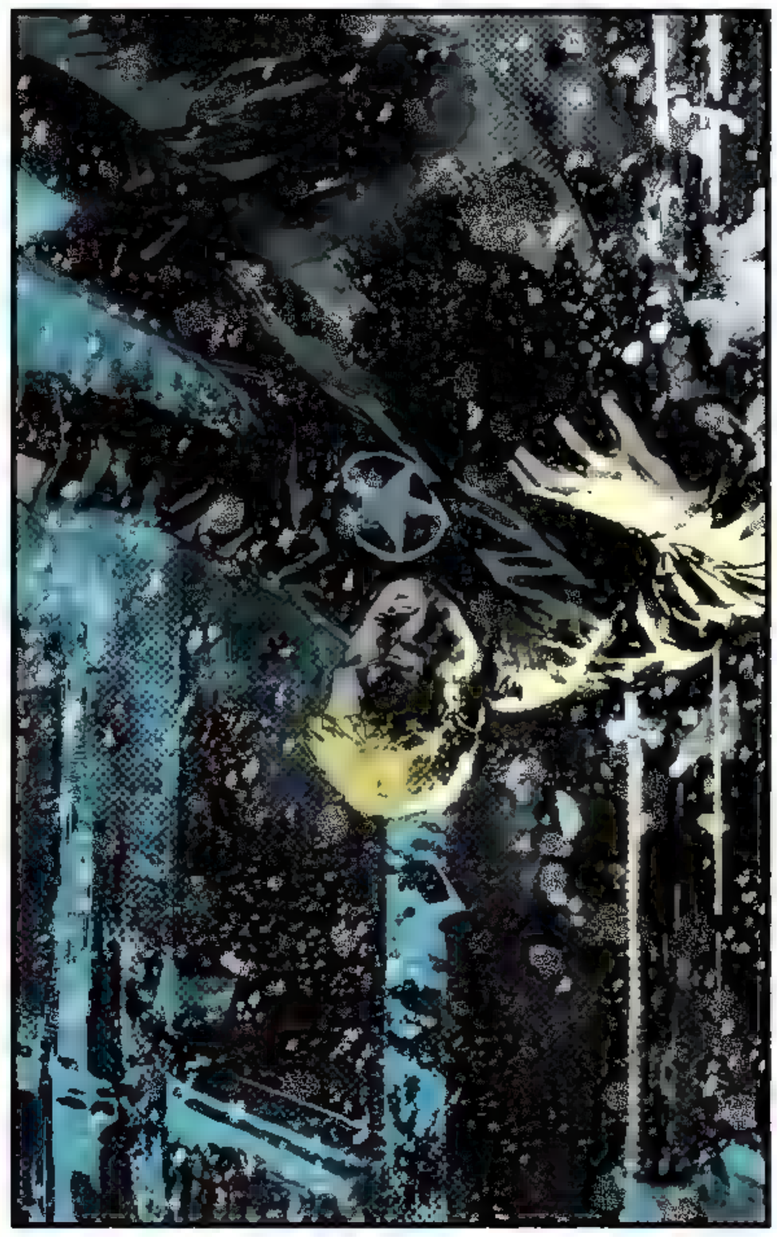
HEH.
THAT DIDN'T GO AS PLANNED, DID IT?











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ROGERS TO ALL POINTS.

I THINK I HAVE A CLUE WHAT THIS DRUG LORD "VOYDANOI" IS SELLING TO THE SHADOW COUNCIL TONIGHT.

I JUST TOOK DOWN A WEAPONIZED HUMAN. SUPER-SOLDIER GRADE.

I'M AUTHORIZING DEPLOYMENT OF THE SHOCKTOXIN FLECHETTE GUNS AT THIS TIME.

STEVE, VOYDANOI'S ON THE PENTHOUSE LEVEL OF THIS BUILDING.

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FIGHT OUR WAY UP.

THEN START NOW. WE CAN'T BE MORE THAN AN HOUR AHEAD OF THE SHADOW COUNCIL.

AND IF THIS ANIMAL IS PEDDLING SOME HOME-BREW SUPER-SOLDIER SERUM, THEY'RE THE LAST PEOPLE ON EARTH WHO SHOULD GET IT.

MAKE YOUR CHOICE, MISTER GRANT.

THIS ONE.

AGNYETA. TAKE MISTER GRANT TO YOUR ROOM.

A FIRST FLOOR ROOM, I HOPE?

INDEED. WHY?

I DON'T LIKE TO BE HEARD. OR SEEN.

AGNYETA. A LOCAL NAME?

YES.

DID MADAME NOT TEACH YOU TO SMILE, AGNYETA?

ah, agnyeta. I've seen so many women smile like you.

GOOD EVENING.

I've been to all the worst places in the world.

I have seen the worst things in the world.

I have done the worst things in the world.

DO you doubt me?

NO.

GOOD. THEN YOU'LL DO AS YOU'RE TOLD.

OPEN THE DOOR.

CLOSE THE DOOR. DO NOT PUT THE LIGHTS ON.

MOON KNIGHT TO ALL POINTS. FIRING THE JAMMER NOW.

UNDERSTOOD.

WE STILL GOOD?

RECEIVING.

OKAY. THE BUILDING'S COMMS AND CCTV SHOULD BE DOWN, BUT WE'RE STILL ONLINE. PROCEEDING.

agnyeta. this satchel contains a lot of local currency, a jacket and a hat.

when I say the word, get out through the fire escape at the end of the corridor and never come back.

...what is happening?

It's a secret.

THANK GOD THEY GAVE ME A PROPER FLECHETTE GUN THIS TIME.

WE'RE LEAVING NOW.

DID YOU KILL HIM?

NO. SADLY. I SHOT HIM WITH A DISSOLVING TOXIN THAT'LL KEEP HIM IN NIGHTMARES FOR A DAY.

RUN.

MOON KNIGHT TO ALL POINTS: THIS ISN'T A DRUG.

TRUST ME ON THIS ONE.

TRUST SOMEONE WHO THINKS HE WAS BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE BY AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN GOD?

STEVE TRUSTS HIM.

STEVE'S BEEN HIT IN THE HEAD A LOT OVER THE YEARS.

LOOK! GUNS! THE LAST ONE OUT OF THIS BATHROOM GETS SOLD TO A RIVAL CARTEL!

OR DOCTOR DOOM! AL-QAEDA! AL-QAEDA!

AL-QAEDA? REALLY?

"HAIL HYDRA" JUST DOESN'T DO THE TRICK.

VIR.NO.

YOU HAVE INCOMING: MORE GUARDS ENTERING THE BAR AREA FROM UPSTAIRS.

FAJRO ALARM LO

BONP VITRO EN OKAZO DE FAJREGO

ALARM!!
OKAZO DE FALREGO
GIVING YOU A DISTRACTION.

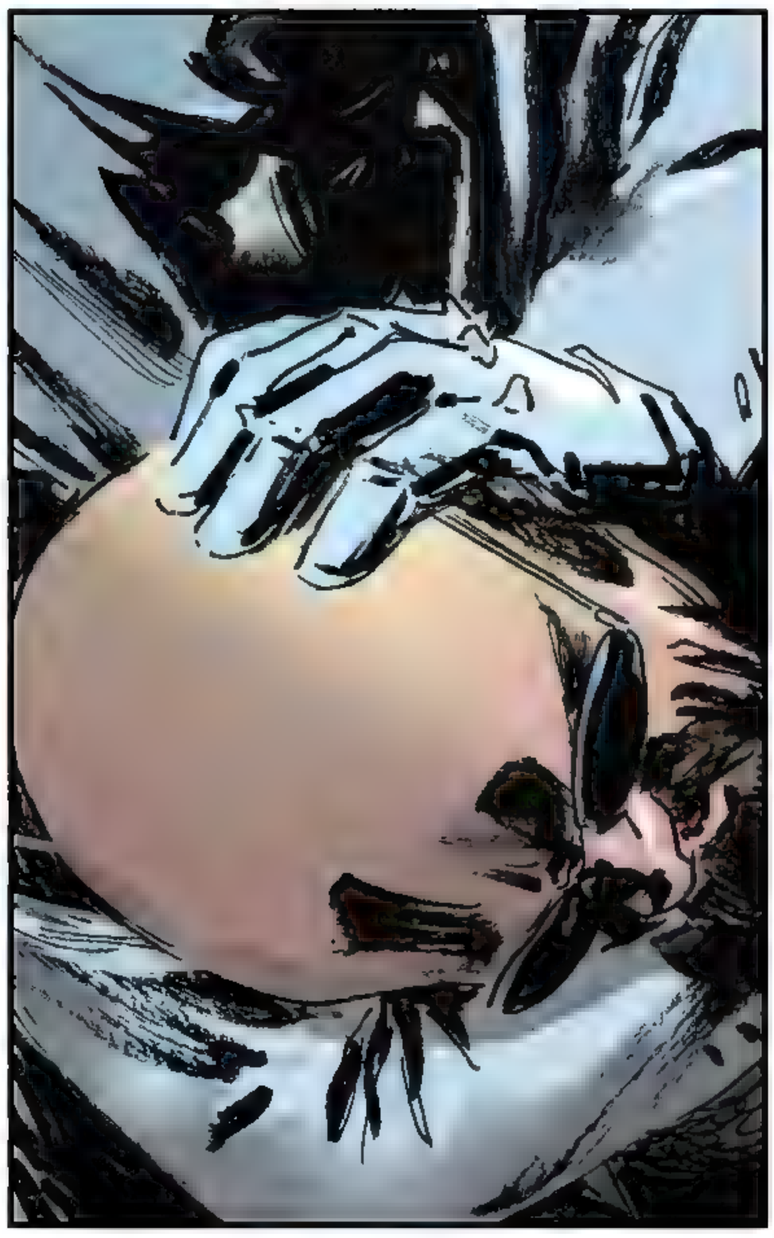
EEEEEEEE
FIRE ALARM?

ONCE AGAIN, STEVE, THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE IS WELL AND TRULY--
CAN IT, NATASHA. STRAIGHT VERTICAL ASSAULT, BRUTE FORCE. NO TIME FOR ANYTHING ELSE.

MK TO ALL POINTS: THIS IS *NOT* A DRUG. THIS IS *POSSESSION.*

POISONING THE HOST BODY DRIVES IT OUT, WHATEVER IT IS.

HELL--



KKKK

BOZHE MOI.

POSSESSION.

THEY'RE NOT SELLING A SUPER-SOLDIER PROCESS TO THE SHADOW COUNCIL, COMMANDER.

GUESS NOT.

THOUGHT I JUST HAD SNOW IN MY EYES WHEN I TOOK OUT THE ALLEYWAY SENTRY.

SO WHAT *IS* THIS GUY SELLING TO THE SHADOW COUNCIL?

MORE THAN ONE GUARD?

I BET WE JUST FOUND THE PENTHOUSE LEVEL.

THAT'S RIGHT! ONE GUY! RUSH ME AS A GROUP!

CLEAR!

MORONS.

DON'T GLOAT. IMAGINE ELITE-TRAINED SHADOW COUNCIL OPERATIVES WITH THIS WHATEVER-IT-IS INSIDE THEM.

ONE DOOR ON THIS CORRIDOR. THIS MUST BE THE PLACE.

VOYDANOI.

THAT IS MY BUSINESS NAME.

MMMMHHH...

YES. I AM READY FOR YOU NOW. WHOEVER YOU ARE.

WE'VE COME FOR WHATEVER YOU'RE SELLING TO THE SHADOW COUNCIL TONIGHT.

THIS?

I'M AFRAID I SMOKED A GREAT DEAL OF IT WHEN I REALIZED MY MEN WEREN'T GOING TO STOP YOU.

AND I MUST ADMIT, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN HARD TO GIVE THIS UP, EVEN FOR THE AMOUNT OF CASH THE COUNCIL WAS OFFERING.

...WHAT DID YOU DO TO YOURSELF, MAN?

I am a businessman.

My business is mostly located over the border in Transia: product labs and purification plants.

And, of course, looking for new product lines. I employ chemists, botanists and even shamans in this regard.

In the course of business, a very, very old grave was uncovered in the forests of Transia.

It contained bones that appeared neither human nor animal.

And it was a shaman, the oldest man in Transia, who knew what they were and what could be done with them.

Some call them Elder Gods or the Many-Souled Ones: creatures who walked the earth before man or animal.

So huge were these things that they contained multiple souls.

They lived and died, so the story goes, before there was a heaven. So there was nowhere for their souls to go.

Their souls are locked in their bones.

And so we take them, and crush them, and release their souls with fire.

And breathe them in.

And take on their greatness.

So the souls are released from the bone by fire into your body.

And what releases them from your bodies?

Massive poisoning. Near-death...

I AM BEYOND THOSE THINGS. I HAVE SMOKED TOO MUCH. THERE ARE TOO MANY GODS INSIDE OF ME.

I WILL KILL YOU NOW.

...OR, OBVIOUSLY, FIRE.

JUST AS WELL I HIT THE FIRE ALARM, REALLY.

AAEEEEIII!

I MET A GIRL CALLED AGNYETA TONIGHT.

AND THAT'S WHY THIS IS GOING TO FEEL GOOD.

THE END

20

SECRET AVENGERS

"ENCIRCLE"

STEVE!

DAMMIT!

WIDOW... YOU... YOU HAVE TO ESCAPE...

RHODEY, GET BACK TO COVER--

TOO LATE--

TAKE THIS. ESCAPE HATCH. RED BUTTON.

THEN *USE* IT, RHODEY!

TOO LATE-- FOR ME--

YOU NEED TO--

ALREADY DISCONNECTED IT FROM ARMOR. WON'T WORK FOR ME NOW.

I'M DYING-- JUST DO IT--

ALL RIGHT. ALL RIGHT. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS IS, BUT I'LL USE IT TO BRING HELP.

DO *NOT* DIE.

JAMES RHODES, SHARON CARTER and STEVE ROGERS are dead

ZERO POINT

EVJE, NORGE

...WHAT?

OH, NO.

"ESCAPE HATCH."

I BARELY REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I WAS HERE. I LOVED THIS PLACE SO.

DAMN YOU, HENRY MCCOY, FOR BEING SO INCREDIBLY BORING THAT I DIDN'T LISTEN TO YOU TALK ABOUT TIME TRAVEL.

ZERO MINUS FIVE YEARS

TRIESTE, ITALIA

ALL RIGHT. GIVEN THAT I'M FIVE YEARS IN THE PAST AND THE EVJE MISSION HASN'T HAPPENED YET, I'M GOING TO TAKE MY TIME WORKING OUT MY NEXT MOVE.

SO: HOW DO YOU WORK?

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW ESCAPE HATCH DEVICE. I AM VOICE-ACTIVATED FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE.

WARNING: LOCATION-SHIFTING MAY BE INEXACT IN PRE-GPS ERAS.

WARNING: TIMEFLOW MUST BE PRESERVED.

HELLO

I HAVE SOME PRELOADED SPACETIME FRAMES IN MY SYSTEM. WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE?

I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHERE YOU CAME FROM.

PRELOAD 2: "COUNT" OSCAR KHRONUS, TIMESHIFT SPECIALIST, COMMENCES WORK AT ZERO MINUS FORTY-FOUR YEARS.

HE VANISHED FORTY YEARS AGO. THAT'S NOT AN ANSWER. WHY AM I HERE?

PRELOAD 1: VILLA VEDOVA HOLDS A LARGE CURRENCY CACHE, A GOLD STORE, ARMS AND DOCUMENTS.

RIGHT. I LEFT HERE SIX YEARS AGO...REMOTELY BLEW IT UP THREE YEARS BACK TO DESTROY SOME MATERIALS...

SO WHY CAN'T I JUST JUMP BACK TO FIVE MINUTES BEFORE WE GOT HIT AND KILL EVERYBODY?

WARNING: TIMEFLOW MUST BE PRESERVED.

I HAVE TO LET EVERYBODY DIE?

PRELOAD 3: HENRY MCCOY'S LAB, SECRET AVENGERS BASE, ZERO MINUS ONE MONTH.

YOU'RE TELLING ME TO TALK TO HENRY. AND TELL HIM WHAT HAPPENED? OR WILL HAPPEN?

WARNING: TIMEFLOW MUST BE PRESERVED.

NO NO NO VERY BAD

I HATE YOU.

OKAY. OSCAR KHRONUS SPENT YEARS TRYING TO GET THE FUNDING FOR TIME-TRAVEL RESEARCH, AND THEN DISAPPEARED.

PRELOAD 2: "COUNT" OSCAR KHRONUS, TIMESHIFT SPECIALIST, COMMENCES WORK AT ZERO MINUS FORTY-FOUR YEARS.

YOU SAID THAT ALREADY.

VILLA VEDOVA, ZERO MINUS FIVE YEARS, FEATURES A LARGE CURRENCY CACHE.

OH. RIGHT.

I HATE YOU.

ZERO MINUS ONE MONTH

SECRET AVENGERS HQ

HENRY?

NATASHA.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT TIME TRAVEL.

OH, I DO LIKE TALKING ABOUT TIME TRAVEL.

I KNOW.

SO. AN OLD FRIEND HAD A TIME-JUMPER ON HIS MISSION TEAM. THEY RAN A MISSION. THE TIME-JUMPER DIED FIRST.

IN FACT, THE WHOLE TEAM DIED, APART FROM MY FRIEND.

QUESTION: IF THE TIME-JUMPER HAD BEEN THE ONLY SURVIVOR, COULD SHE HAVE SAVED HER TEAM?

BY GOING BACK IN TIME AND CHANGING THINGS, YOU MEAN?

I IMAGINE THAT YOU IMAGINE THE TIME-JUMPER COULD GO AND GET TWO BIG GUNS AND THEN APPEAR BEHIND THE BAD GUYS THREE MINUTES BEFORE IT ALL WENT BAD.

COULDN'T SHE?

CAUSING SOMETHING TO VIOLENTLY UNHAPPEN IS LIKE THROWING DYNAMITE INTO A POND. GREAT WAVES AND UNPREDICTABLE SPLASHING.

THE FLOW OF TIME MUST BE PRESERVED.

EVERYTHING AFTER SHE TIME-JUMPS IS UP FOR GRABS, AS IT WERE, BECAUSE IT HASN'T HAPPENED YET.

BUT, AGAIN, SHE CAN'T LAND AT A POINT THAT MEANS, GOING FORWARD, THAT TWO OF HER ARE RUNNING AROUND.

GOD, I HATE TIME-TRAVEL.

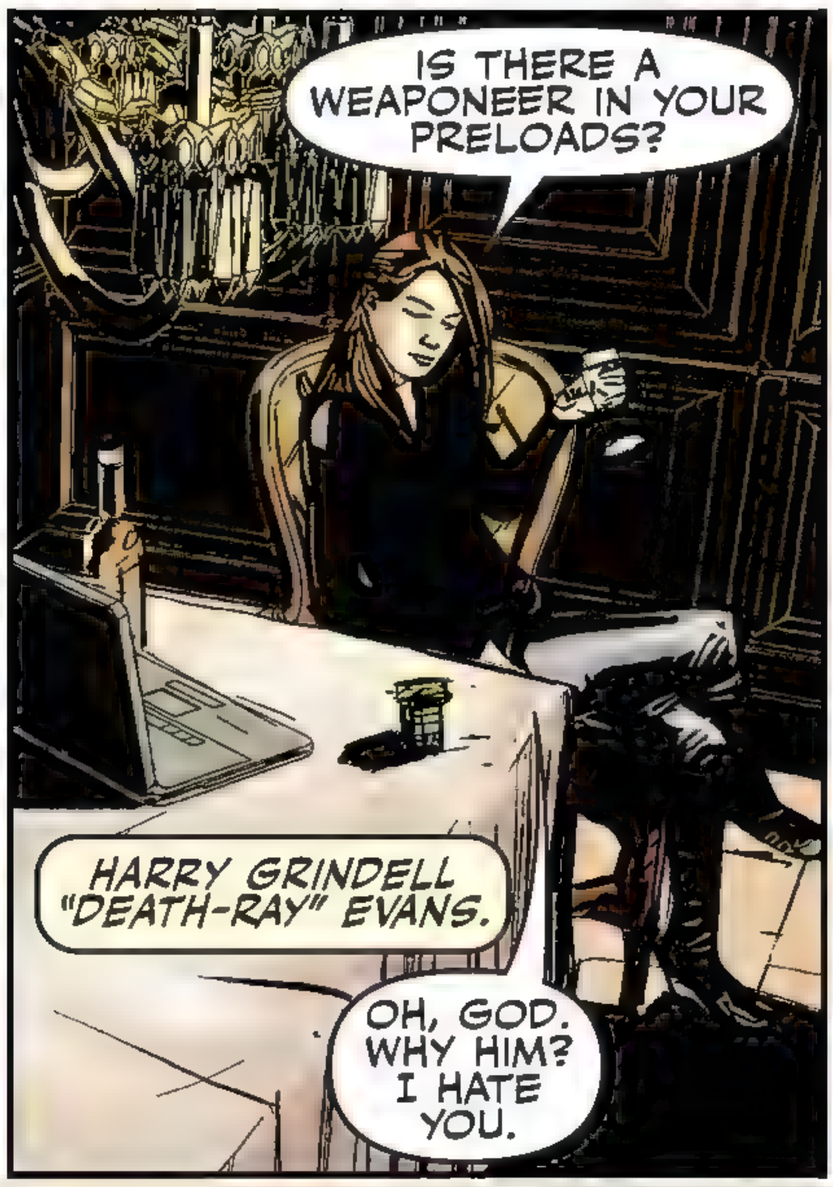
I BET YOU WISH YOUR FRIEND HAD NEVER MENTIONED IT.

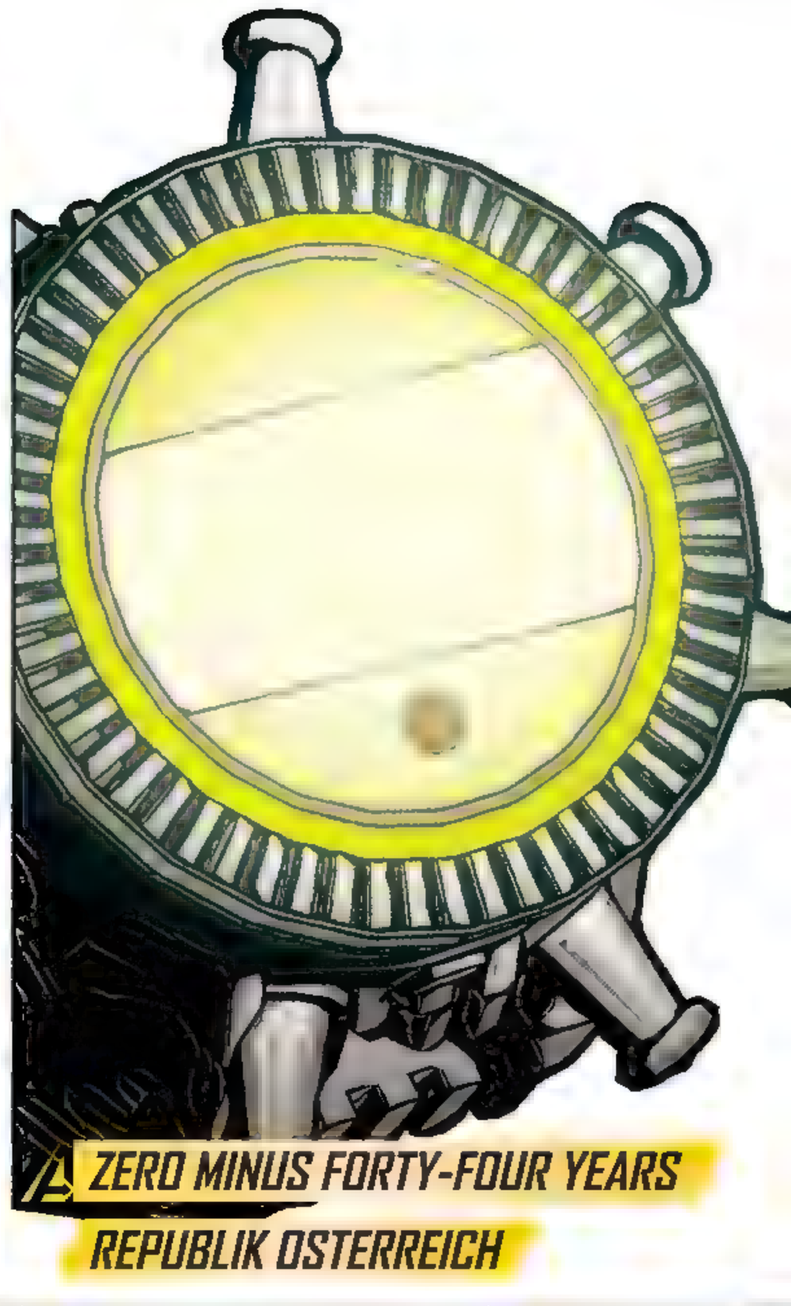
IMAGINE HOW MUCH MORE COMPLICATED IT MIGHT BE TO CHANGE TIME IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU APPEAR NOT TO HAVE CHANGED TIME.

KEEP TALKING.

ZERO POINT MINUS ONE WEEK

EVJE, NORGE



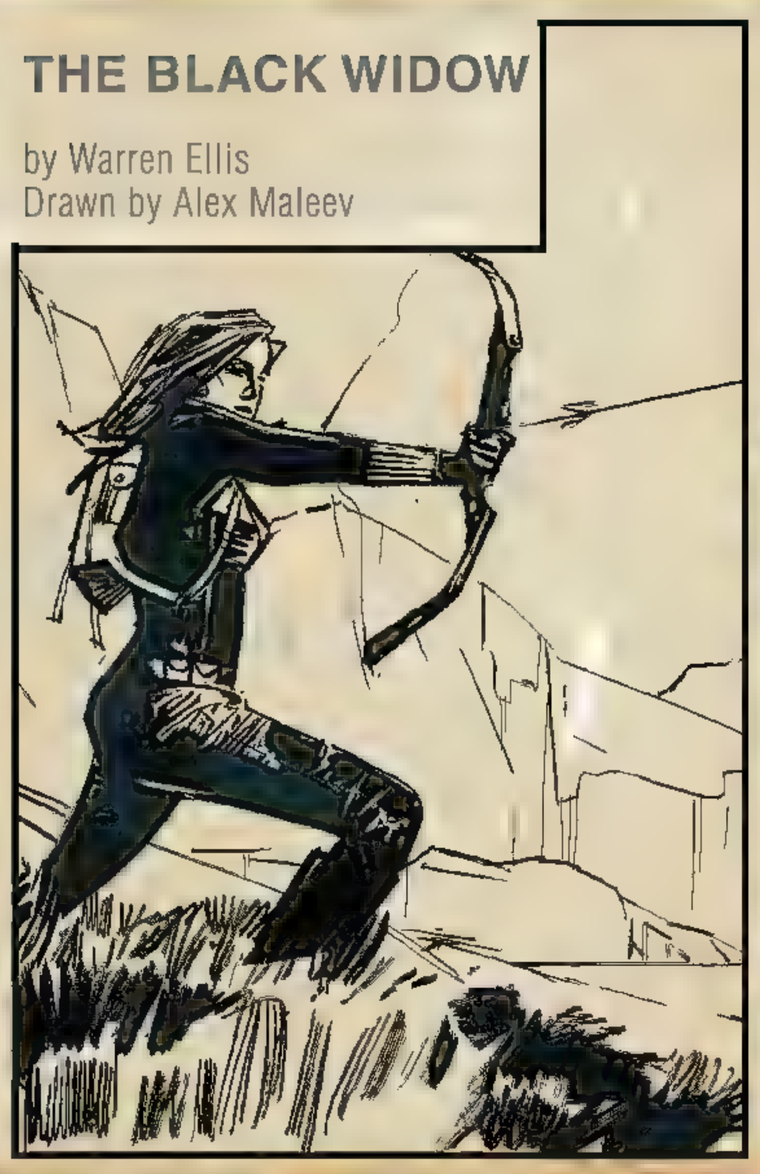


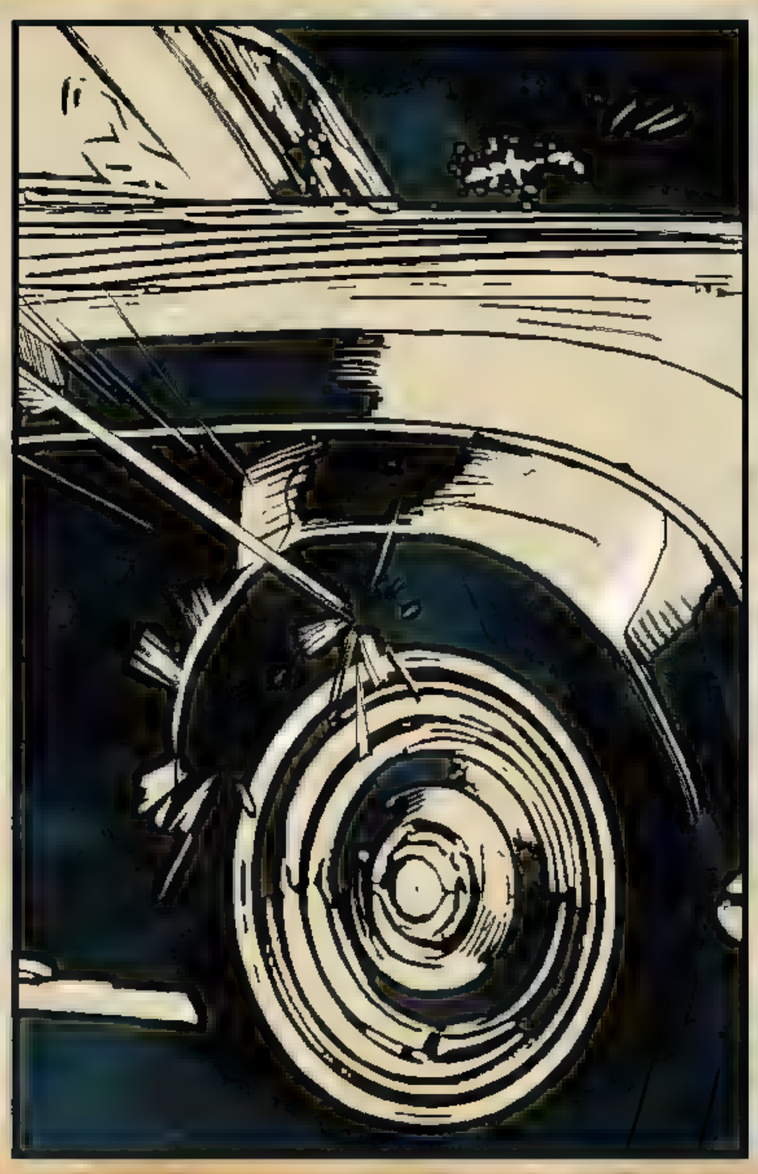
THE BLACK WIDOW

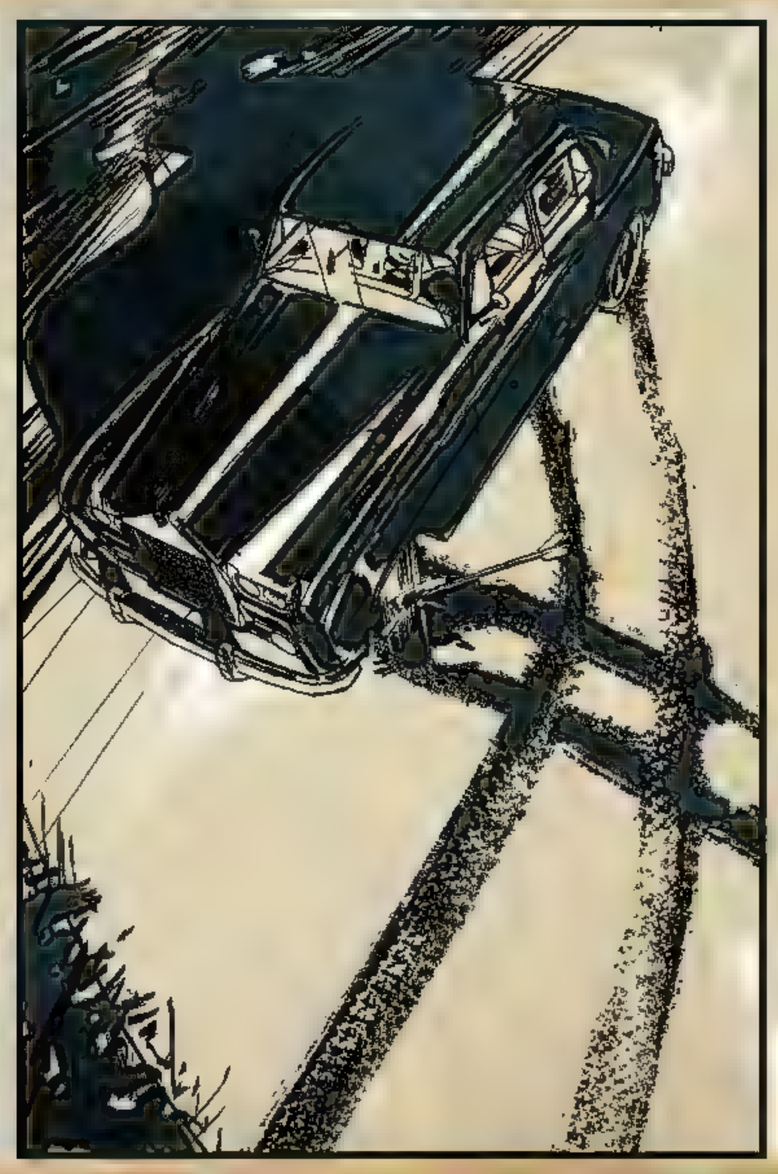
by Warren Ellis
Drawn by Alex Maleev

THE BLACK WIDOW

by Warren Ellis
Drawn by Alex Maleev







THE BLACK WIDOW

by Warren Ellis
Drawn by Alex Maleev

IT'S NATASHA ROMANOFF! THE SOVIET AGENT!

KONGO! DESTROY HER!

YES, MY COUNT. KONGO DESTROY GOOD.

HE'S NOT A REAL COUNT.

THE BLACK WIDOW

by Warren Ellis
Drawn by Alex Maleev

HA! KONGO HAVE HAND! KONGO FIGHT GOOD!

KONGO NOT COUNT PAST ONE.

AAAAA

AAAAAAA

AAAAAAAAAA

BLACK WIDOW! FACE ME!

THE BLACK WIDOW

by Warren Ellis
Drawn by Alex Maleev

MY TIME GUN WILL SEND YOUR HEART TO BE EATEN BY DINOSAURS!

AAAGG

WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH MY HUSBAND AND I, WOMAN?

THE BLACK WIDOW

by Warren Ellis
Drawn by Alex Maleev

I WANT YOU TO WORK FOR ME.

I WANT YOU TO DISAPPEAR. IN RETURN, I WILL GIVE YOU MORE MONEY THAN YOU'VE EVER SEEN TO BUILD ME A TIME-TRAVEL DEVICE.

BUT...

...THAT'S ALL I'VE EVER WANTED.

...WELL.

OKAY, THEN...?

ZERO MINUS SIX YEARS

GOGOGOGOCH, CYMRU

THIS IS MY SANCTUM OF SORROW, WHERE I DRUNKENLY BEMOAN THE LACK OF REALLY BIG STUFF TO KILL THESE DAYS.

NATASHA ROMANOVA. WHY DO YOU DISTURB MY MISERY?

I WANT TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS GUN, HARRY.

IF YOU SELL IT, COPY IT OR SELL FUNCTIONS DERIVED FROM IT, THERE WILL BE NOWHERE YOU CAN HIDE FROM ME.

I'M PAYING IN GOLD.

OOH, YES. I'M EVEN SMILING, LOOK. SHOULD YOU REALLY BE FUNDING TERRORISTS LIKE ME, THOUGH?

NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW. WILL THEY?

NOT FROM ME. CAN'T WAIT TO SHOOT SOMEONE WITH THIS JUST TO SEE WHAT IT DOES...

ZERO MINUS FIVE YEARS
NEW YORK CITY, UNITED STATES

...AND, WELL, BECAUSE OF THE SHORT WINDOW, WE WENT INTO THE MISSION WITHOUT ENOUGH INTELLIGENCE. WILL YOU HELP ME, DR. LUDGATE?

YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE SHADOW COUNCIL AND THE THINGS THEY WORSHIP.

YOU KNOW THEM?

I KNOW OF THEM. TELL ME, WHY ARE YOU NOT GOING TO YOUR FRIEND STEPHEN STRANGE WITH THIS?

YOU HAVE A REPUTATION FOR BEING MORE...PRAGMATIC THAN DOCTOR STRANGE.

PRELOAD 4: DR ANTHONY LUDGATE, AKA DOCTOR DRUID. TIMEFRAME: 36 HOURS BEFORE HIS DEATH.

(BURNED IN A GARBAGE CAN BY DAIMON HELLSTROM.)

WHAT I NEED TO KNOW IS HOW TO CLOSE THAT PORTAL, AND I DON'T KNOW MAGIC--

MAGIC, MS. ROMANOVA, IS THE CREATION OF PHYSICAL EFFECT THROUGH WILL AND ART.

SO I COULD GIVE YOU A MANTRA AND A DEAD CHICKEN TO KILL YOUR MAGIC PORTAL. BUT, REALLY, A SUITCASE NUKE MIGHT DO THE SAME THING.

REALLY? I'VE SEEN MAGICIANS ATTACK EACH OTHER WITH, I DON'T KNOW, MYSTIC BLASTS OR SOMETHING...

RADIATION, MY DEAR. THEY IRRADIATE EACH OTHER. WE SURROUND THESE THINGS WITH ART AND ICONOGRAPHY SIMPLY BECAUSE IT INCREASES THEIR POWER.

SO WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW IS EXACTLY HOW TO IRRADIATE THE PORTAL INTO DISSOLUTION...

ZERO MINUS SIX MONTHS
WASHINGTON, DC
--QUITE SIMPLE, GENERAL BARGER. YOU ORDER THE DEVICE LOADED INTO THE WAR MACHINE ARMOR. OR I JUST UPLOAD THE VIDEO OF YOU WITH THE--
NO, NO, THAT'S FINE. WHATEVER YOU WANT.
HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN DOING THIS?
I HAVE BEEN ACTIVATED FOR SEVEN WEEKS, FOUR DAYS, SIXTEEN HOURS AND--
I HATE YOU.
ZERO MINUS THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS
CICADE KANG, BRASIL
BEHOLD! ITERATION TWELVE OF MY PERSONAL TIME TRAVEL DEVICE!
KHRONUS, IT'S THE SIZE OF A BUS.
YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN ITERATION NINE. ACTUALLY, YOU STILL CAN, I CAN'T GET IT OUT OF THE BASEMENT.
I WANT IT TO FIT ON MY WRIST, KHRONUS.
AND IT WILL. IT WILL. DINNER?
KONGO COOK GOOD.
ZERO MINUS FIVE YEARS
THIS GUN. MUCH MORE COMPLICATED THAN IT LOOKS. TELL ME, DID YOU SEE IT MAKE ENTRY WOUNDS?
NOT THAT I RECALL.
I'M NOT SURPRISED. THE BEAM IT PROJECTS ISN'T THE WEAPON. IT'S A GUIDELINE, LIKE A TUBE.

THE GUIDE-BEAM IS REPORTING DISTANCE-TO-TARGET BACK TO THE GUN.

THE GUN SHOOTS A TINY BULLET OF PHASED MATTER DOWN THE TUBE THAT IS PRIMED TO GO OFF INSIDE THE TARGET.

ALL RIGHT. HERE'S WHAT I NEED YOU TO WORK OUT...

ZERO MINUS THIRTY YEARS

STILL TOO BIG.

BUT I NEED THE COMPUTER TO CALCULATE THE MOTION OF THE PLANET IN SPACETIME, OR ELSE--

OR ELSE I COULD TIMEJUMP INTO VACUUM, I KNOW. GOD SAVE US FROM MEN WHO LIKE EXPLAINING THINGS.

ZERO MINUS FOUR YEARS

THIS GOES AGAINST THE GRAIN, WOMAN. BUILDING A GUN-DILUTER.

NOW YOU GET TO HAVE YOUR FUN. THESE ARE THE SPECS...

OH. OH, NOW. THIS IS DEEP JOY. A CHUNK OF OCCULT DIMENSION IS A VERY BIG THING TO KILL.

ZERO MINUS TWENTY-FOUR YEARS

ITERATION TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY-NINE!

GETTING THERE. NOW WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT VOICE-CONTROL AND RECORDING. BUT FIRST--WINE.

KONGO LIKE WINE. KONGO HUG 'TASHA GOOD.

TRY NOT TO CRUSH MY SPINE THIS TIME.

ZERO MINUS THREE YEARS

NICE LITTLE PILE YOU'VE GOT HERE.

THAT'S THE DEVICE?

IT IS. POWER UP, AND YOU'LL SEE THREE BUTTONS ON THE TOUCHSCREEN.

BUTTON ONE WILL SWITCH EVERY ONE OF THOSE WEAPONS IN THE VICINITY TO STUN MODE.

IT'LL STILL HURT LIKE HELL, AND IF YOU'RE HIT YOU'LL PASS CLEAN OUT FOR A FEW MINUTES. BEST I CAN DO.

BUTTON TWO: OVERLOAD. THEN HIT BUTTON THREE AND TOSS THE THING AS FAR AWAY AS YOU CAN.

VERY GOOD. DID YOU WONDER WHY I WANTED TO TAKE POSSESSION OF IT HERE?

I WAS CURIOUS, LOVE, YES. I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU WANTED TO GO ON HOLIDAY.

NO. YOU SEE, RIGHT NOW, I'M IN AMERICA, AND I'VE REALIZED I NEED TO GET RID OF A LOT OF DOCUMENTS AND MATERIAL.

YOU'RE IN AMERICA. RIGHT.

IT'S TRUE. AND I'M REMOTELY DETONATING THE EXPLOSIVES IN THE FOUNDATIONS.

BECAUSE YOU WERE RIGHT, HARRY: I CAN'T LIVE WITH HAVING FUNDED YOU. AND I FOUND OUT THAT YOU SOLD THE GUN DESIGN TO THE SHADOW COUNCIL.

GOODBYE.

ZERO MINUS FOUR YEARS

COUNT OSCAR KHRONUS

I'M SO SORRY.

KONGO WILL BE OKAY.

THE COUNT, HE WAS HAPPY. FORTY YEARS, HE WAS HAPPY.

HE HAD WORK, AND HOUSE, AND MONEY, AND TIME.

THE COUNT WOULD SAY TO KONGO, 'TASHA GAVE US THE BEST LIFE.

STRAP IS FINISHED. IS AT HOUSE WAITING FOR YOU.

KONGO TOOK POISON. WILL SLEEP HERE. WITH THE COUNT.

GOODBYE, 'TASHA. THANK YOU.

...

...GOODBYE, KONGO.

THANK YOU.

ZERO MINUS THIRTY SECONDS

EVJE, NORGE

ZERO POINT

ZERO PLUS ONE SECOND

ALMOST WORTH THE WAIT.

MISSION OVER.

I HAVE BEEN ACTIVATED FOR EIGHTEEN WEEKS, TWO DAYS, NINE HOURS AND THREE MINUTES. GOODBYE.

UUUHHH...

...'TASHA... THAT YOU...?

WHAT HAPPENED?

THEIR GUNS MALFUNCTIONED AND BLEW UP. MUST'VE BEEN UNTESTED WEAPONRY. DUMB LUCK.

YEAH. DUMB LUCK TENDS TO BE THE ONLY WAY WE SURVIVE THESE MISSIONS.

AND THAT?

BLOWBACK WHEN THEIR GUNS COOKED OFF.

WELL, THAT'S ONE WAY TO CLOSE A SUPPLY TUNNEL TO HELL, I GUESS.

WHAT HAPPENED TO...?

I ACTIVATED IT AND IT CAUGHT FIRE. UNTESTED KIT AGAIN.

HUH. JUST AS WELL WE DIDN'T NEED IT, I GUESS.

YEAH.

21

SECRET AVENGERS

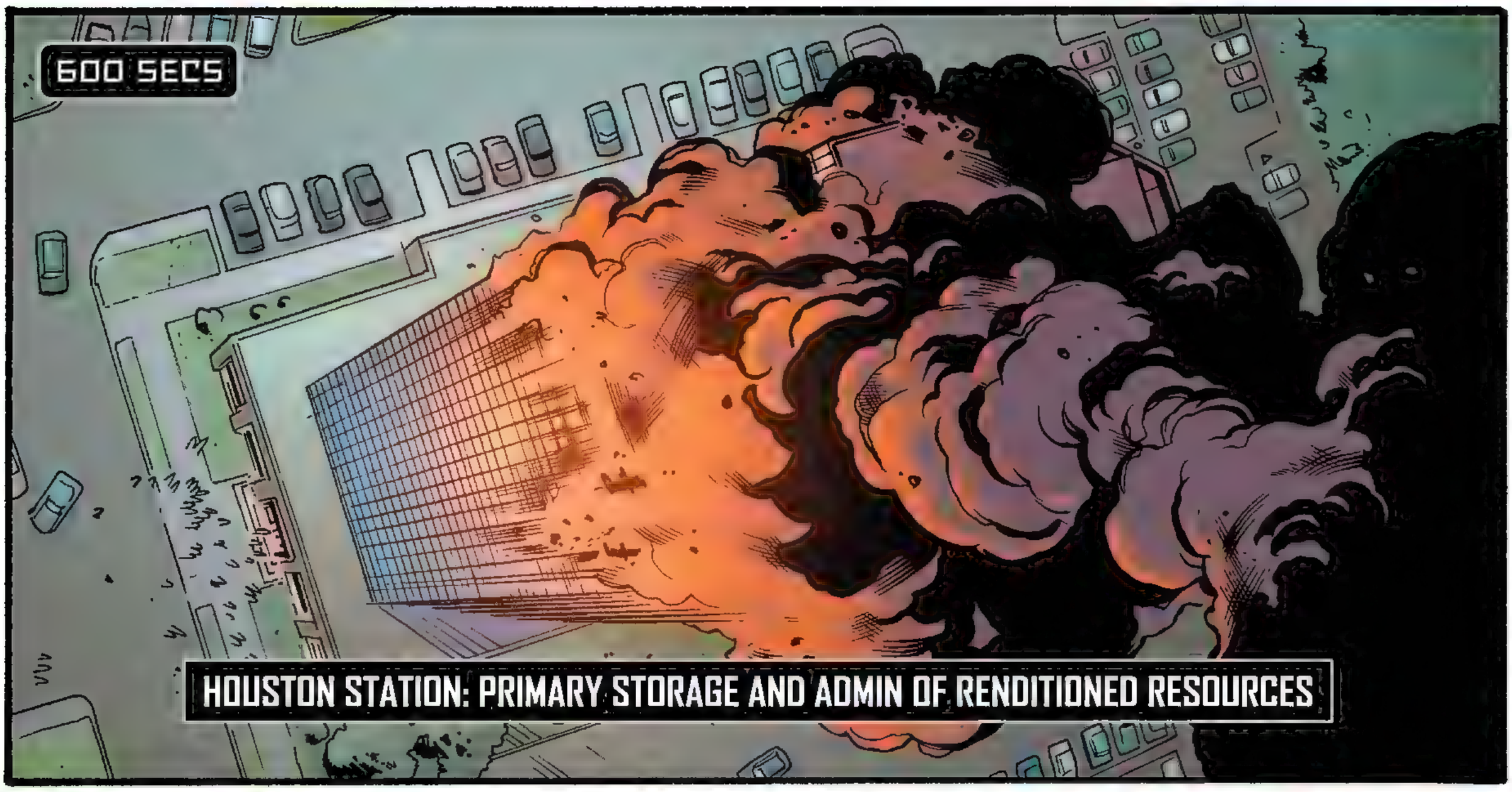
"FINAL LEVEL"

O*N*E

OFFICE OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY

GATHERING ANTI-TERRORIST INTELLIGENCE AND RESOURCES

FIRE ALARM
O*N*E HOUSTON STATION FIRE PROCEDURE ALL STAFF EVACUATE. ALPHA TEAM TO COMMAND LEVEL. MANUALLY SECURE ALL SYSTEMS.
FIRE



MICROWAVE HEATERS RUNNING. HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTORS RUNNING. SOUND CANNONS RUNNING.

WE HAVE A RATHER LOVELY FALSE FIRE GOING.

I COULD CRANK UP THE FORCE-FIELD THROWER, TO FAKE A LITTLE EARTHQUAKE, JUST TO INDUCE MORE HASTE...?

LET'S NOT OVER-EGG IT, HANK. STAY CLOAKED, STAY CLOSE.

TEAM ONE CLOSING IN ON COMMAND ROOM. TEAM TWO EN ROUTE TO STORAGE.

I CAN'T GET THE FIRE CONTROL SYSTEMS UP.

500 SECS

THIS IS STARTING TO SMELL LIKE SABOTAGE. MS. SUNG?

THE BUILDING'S CLEAR. JUST US LEFT.

I CAN'T LOCK THE DOORS.

I'M AFRAID THAT'S MY FAULT.

PLEASE REMAIN CALM.

I NEED TO KNOW WHICH ONE OF YOU IS WORKING FOR THE SHADOW COUNCIL.

450 SECS

HOW DARE YOU WALK IN HERE WITH A GUN? THIS IS THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY AND I DEMAND YOU--

MR. AKINS. I UNDERSTAND YOU RUN THE ALPHA TEAM. I UNDERSTAND YOUR INSTINCT TO PROTECT YOUR PEOPLE.

DON'T MAKE ME INCAPACITATE YOU.

YOU'RE COMMANDER STEVE ROGERS.

YES, MS. HOOD. AND YOU WERE A LIEUTENANT IN THE MARINE CORPS.

WE MADE IT LOOK LIKE THE BUILDING WAS AFLAME TO ENSURE OUR PRIVACY.

400 SECS

WE HAVE A TIME FACTOR HERE, COMMANDER.

OUR INTEL SAYS THAT THE SHADOW COUNCIL MEMBER IN THIS ROOM IS GOING TO SABOTAGE YOUR STORAGE FACILITY TODAY.

350 SECS

OKAY, THEN.

I DON'T BELIEVE IN TORTURE. IT'S UGLY, DISHONORABLE AND UNRELIABLE.

YOUR MISSION IS OVER. MAKE YOURSELF KNOWN AND YOU'LL BE TREATED WELL.

SO I'M GOING TO LET MY COLLEAGUES DO IT.

AAAAA

UUGGKK

BEEN A WHILE SINCE I CUT A MAN'S FACE OFF.

BEEN EVEN LONGER SINCE I DID IT AND HAD THEM SURVIVE IT.

ME. IT'S ME.

I DON'T BELIEVE YOU, LT. HOOD.

PARAGUAY. ONE YEAR AGO.

300 SECS

THEY'RE DEFINITELY STORING SOMETHING RECOVERED FROM A DIG IN PARAGUAY THERE, STEVE.

ALL RIGHT. YOU COME WITH ME.

KNIGHT, WIDOW--GET THESE PEOPLE OUT OF THE BUILDING.

HANK-- KILL THE FIRE ALARM, START THE LOCKDOWN.

AND ACTIVATING ELEVATOR THREE FOR YOUR USE.

CRACKING THE SECURITY ON THIS PARAGUAY FILE...

I THINK YOU SHOULD START BY TELLING ME ABOUT PARAGUAY.

YES, SIR.

I WAS GIVEN THE LOCATION BY MY SUPERIORS IN THE COUNCIL. I MADE IT LOOK LIKE IT'D BEEN OBTAINED IN THE COURSE OF ORDINARY INTEL GATHERING.

250 SECS

PARAGUAY
NUEVA THULE
ONE YEAR AGO

THE COUNCIL SET UP THE APPEARANCE OF A BREEDING EXPERIMENT FROM THE 1950S.

A REMOTE VILLAGE CALLED "NUEVA THULE." EVIDENCE OF YET ANOTHER BAND OF MAD NAZI SCIENTISTS HIDING IN SOUTH AMERICA.

THIS IS TEAM TWO: WE'RE NOW IN THE ELEVATORS SERVING THE STORAGE VOLUME.

ALL THE WAY TO THE BOTTOM, MR. RHODES. SUBLEVEL 30.

SUBLEVEL 30

HOUSTON STATION STORAGE VOLUME

IT WAS A FAKE?

YES AND NO. THE OPERATION DID HAPPEN, BUT IT WASN'T NAZIS AND IT WASN'T SIXTY YEARS AGO. THEY JUST MADE IT LOOK THAT WAY.

200 SECS

YOU... THE SHADOW COUNCIL... CONDUCTED BREEDING EXPERIMENTS.

THEY WERE VOLUNTEERS. MEN, MOSTLY.

THE COUNCIL WAS HOPING FOR A HYBRID THAT COULD MORE EASILY COMMUNICATE WITH OUR OWNERS.

THAT WASN'T QUITE WHAT THEY GOT BACK, BUT THE RESULTS WERE... USEFUL.

SO A SCENARIO WAS CONSTRUCTED, VERY CAREFULLY. NAZIS. THINGS FROM BEYOND SPACE.

HALF-ALIEN SPAWN SO AWFUL THEY HAD TO BE HOOKED TO NUCLEAR-POWERED REFRIGERANT UNITS AND BURIED.

THERE'S A MAGIC WORD, SIR, THAT CASTS A SPELL ON ANYONE IN MILITARY INTEL.

"SUPER-SOLDIER."

150 SECS

SINCE 1941, THERE HAVE BEEN MORE THAN FIVE HUNDRED RECORDED ATTEMPTS TO CREATE A "SUPER-SOLDIER" WITH THE CAPABILITIES OF STEVE ROGERS.

FEWER THAN TEN OF THE SUBJECTS ARE BELIEVED TO BE ALIVE TODAY.

O*N*E HAD ONLY TO BE TOLD THAT WEIRD, BURIED SUPERHUMANS WERE THERE FOR THE TAKING.

THEY'RE DOWN THERE NOW, IN THE BASEMENT WITH ALL THE OTHER THINGS THEY'VE GATHERED THAT THEY THINK ONE DAY COULD BE OF USE AGAINST SOME THREAT OR OTHER.

TAKE OUT THIS BUILDING AND ITS STOCKPILE, TAKE OUT ONE FUTURE HURDLE AGAINST THE RISE OF THE SHADOW COUNCIL.

SOMETHING I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

YOU WERE PREPARED TO DO SOMETHING TO DESTROY THIS BUILDING, AND KILL ALL THE PEOPLE IN IT. BUT YOU BALKED AT YOUR COLLEAGUES BEING TORTURED. WHY?

I HAD A PLAN.

I CAN CONTROL ALL KINDS OF BUILDING OPERATIONS FROM THE COMMAND LEVEL.

I WAS GOING TO SET OFF THE FIRE ALARM, AND ENSURE EVERYONE GOT OUT.

I WAS BRIEFED THAT IT WOULD TAKE TEN MINUTES FOR THE CREATURES TO AWAKEN AFTER I SHUT THE REFRIGERANTS OFF.

SO THE FIRE ALARM WENT OFF ANYWAY, AND I WAS THE FIRST PERSON ON THE COMMAND LEVEL.

I KILLED THE REFRIGERANTS ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT ORDINARY EVACUATION WOULD FOLLOW.

AND EVERYONE I KNEW WOULD BE WELL CLEAR OF THE BUILDING BEFORE IT WAS TOO LATE.

I WASN'T INTERESTED IN KILLING ANYONE, SIR. JUST DESTROYING THE STOCKPILE.

AND NOW WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE.

100 SECS

SUBLEVEL 30

THIS IS ROGERS TO TEAM TWO. PLEASE RESPOND. TEAM TWO, CAN YOU HEAR ME?

50 SECS

GETTING SOME STRANGE READINGS FROM YOUR LOCATION, TEAM TWO, PLEASE ADVISE...

STEVE, IT'S SHARON. SIGNAL'S BAD DOWN HERE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON. THIS PLACE WAS OBVIOUSLY A DEEP FREEZE, BUT NOW IT'S THAWING, AND THERE'S... WAIT.

40 SECS

WHATEVER'S IN THESE TANKS HERE...THEY'RE WAKING UP.

HANK, CAN WE REACTIVATE THE REFRIGERATION?

THE CIRCUIT LOOKS TO BE DEAD.

DAMMIT. RHODEY, BRING THE BIGGEST GUN YOU'VE GOT ONLINE, RIGHT NOW.

20 SECS

WHAT DID YOU DO TO THE REFRIGERANT SYSTEM?

I PUT A POWER SURGE THROUGH IT AND THEN LOCKED THE CIRCUIT OFF. THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO NOW.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE A MARINE.

THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING WE CAN DO.

I HAVE MULTIPLE LIFE SIGNS WITHIN TWO SOURCES.

STEVE, ABOUT YOUR SYMKARIAN MISSION: DID YOU SAY SOMETHING ABOUT "MANY-SOULED ONES"?

00 SECS

BATTLE.

RHODEY, I SAID--

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M LOOKING AT YET, STEVE.

ALPHA TEAM IS OUT, BUILDING'S SECURE. WHAT NEXT, STEVE?

THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO BUT DIE.

THESE ARE NOT WARRIORS OR WEAPONS.

OPEN FIRE--

STEVE, I'VE GOT TO SAY, THESE PEOPLE JUST LOOK SICK. WE SHOULD BE GETTING MEDICS IN, NOT--

SHUT UP, RHODEY.

I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER I AM DISGUSTED OR HUNGRY.

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, KILL ME FOR SHOWING A LITTLE HUMAN COMPASSION--

THEY MIGHT!

HA!

WE ARE LOSING THE BATTLE-GROUND!

BACK TO THE ELEVATOR!

GOT YOU COVERED.

WE NEED TO FIND THESE THINGS' HEADS AND PUT HOLES IN THEM BEFORE THEY STICK 'EM OUT A WINDOW.

HANK, I THOUGHT I SAID NOT TO USE THE FORCE-FIELD THROWERS.

NOT GUILTY, COMMANDER.

IT'S OUR TWO TARGETS.

MY READINGS SUGGEST THEY ARE DRAWING MASS FROM... SOMEWHERE ELSE.

MAKE SENSE, MAN.

THE TWO BREEDING EXPERIMENTS DOWNSTAIRS WOULD SEEM TO BE LIVING PORTALS TO THE DIMENSION OF THE SHADOW COUNCIL'S BELOVED OTHERWORLDLY MASTERS.

WE ARE LOOKING AT AN ALIEN INVASION CONDUCTED THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF, NOT SPACE OR AIR, BUT FLESH.

CAN IT BE CONTAINED?

THEY'RE GROWING FASTER THAN TEAM TWO CAN BLOW BITS OFF THEM.

HOW MUCH POWER CAN YOU PUT BEHIND THOSE FORCE-FIELD THROWERS, HANK?

NO.

STEVE, I HAVE THE GREATEST RESPECT FOR YOU. BUT I WILL NOT KILL AGAIN FOR YOU. AND ESPECIALLY NOT MY OWN TEAM.

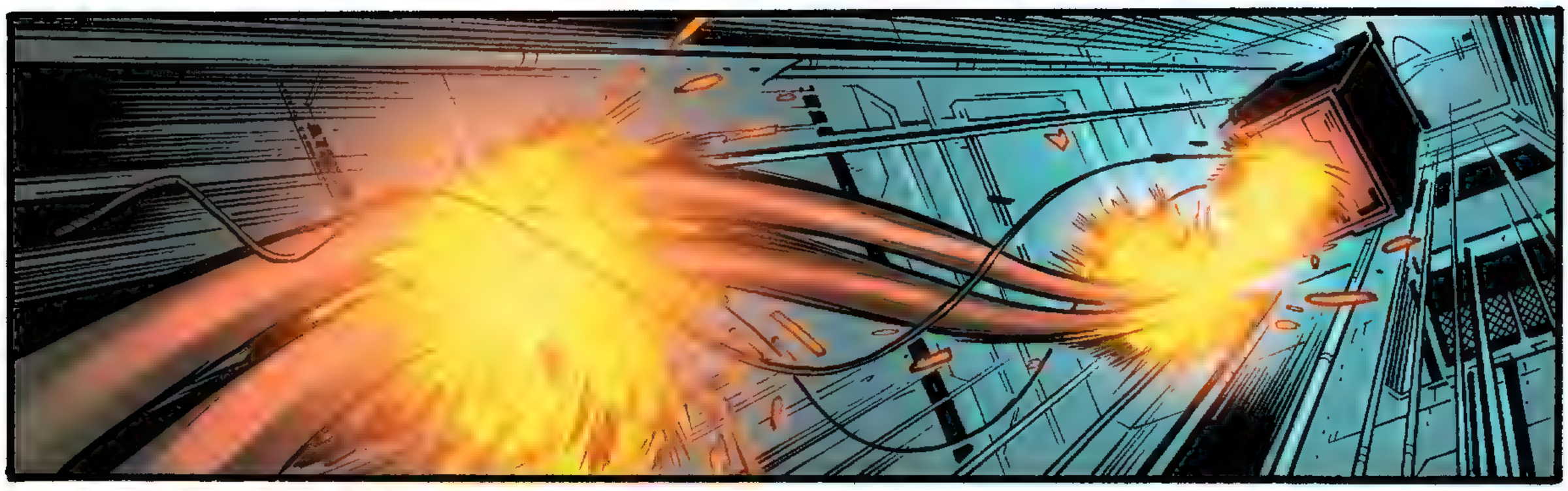
THEN GIVE ME OPTIONS.

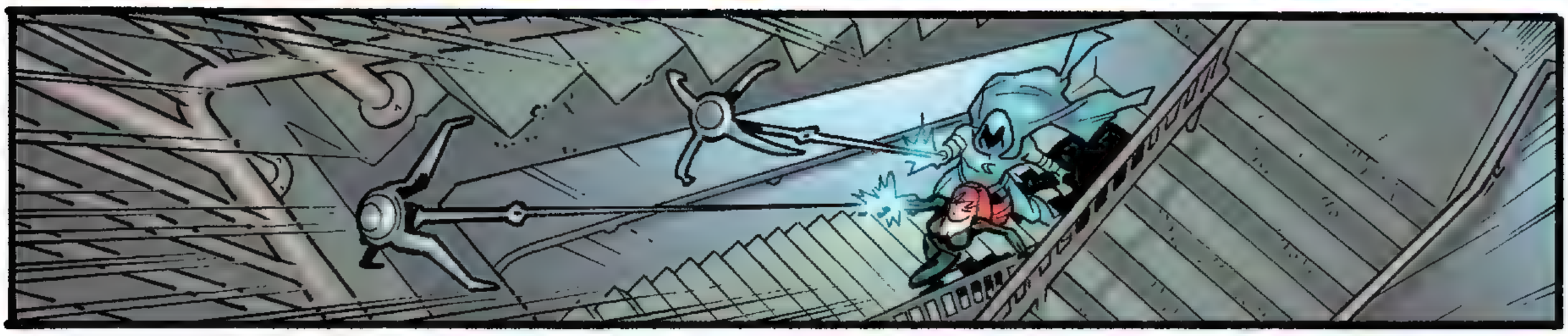
GET TO THE ROOF. ALL OF YOU.

ALL TEAMS! MAKE FOR THE ROOF!

GET READY. THIS IS GONNA BE SCARY.

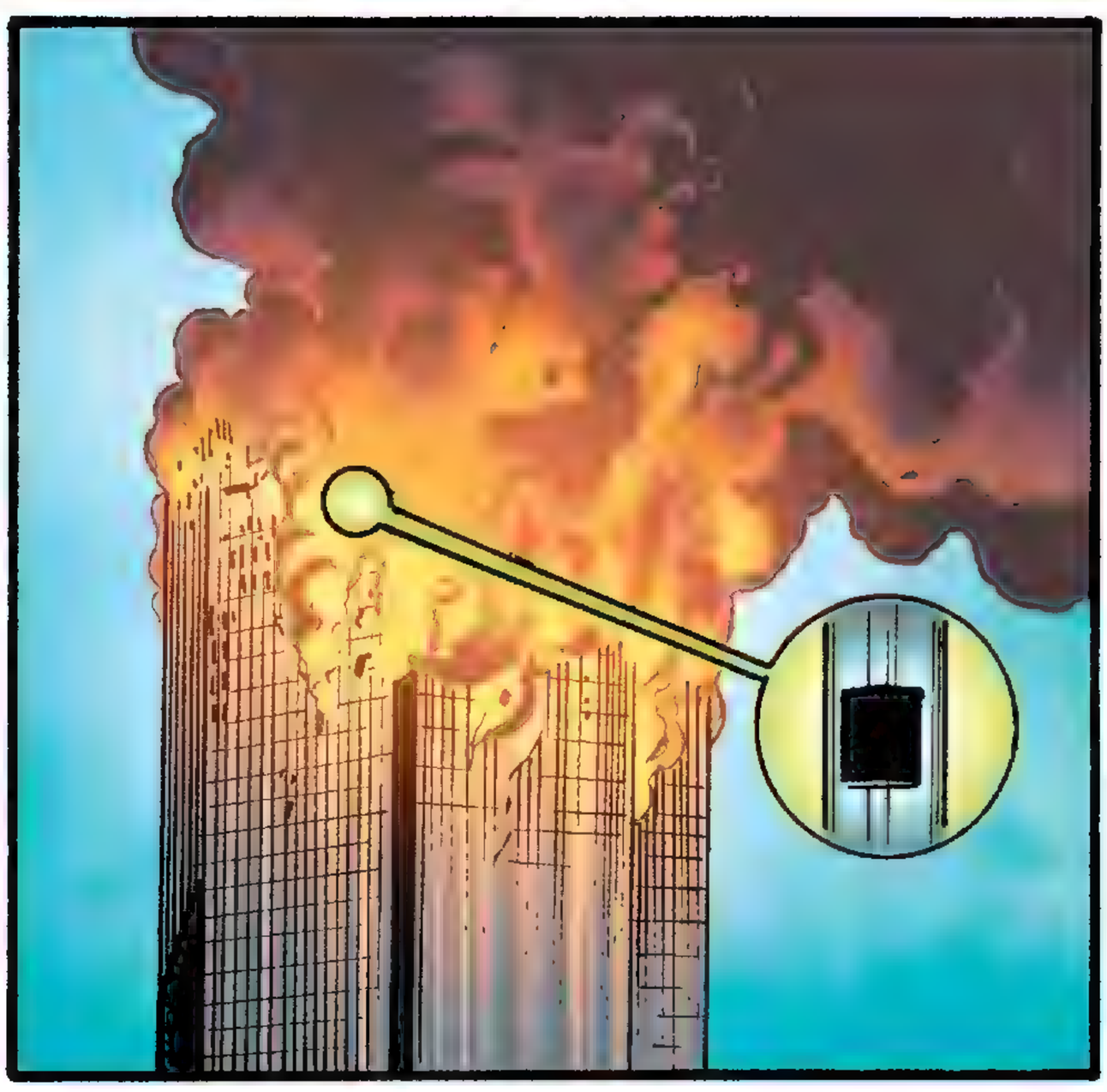
SCARIER THAN *WHAT?*





BUILDING AND POSITIONING THE FORCE-FIELD ATTACK NOW.
I MAY HAVE TO REDIRECT POWER FROM THE CLOAKING SYSTEM.

CRANK UP THE FALSE FIRE PROJECTION, THEN. MAKE IT LOOK GOOD.



HOW DO WE GET UP THERE?

HOW DO YOU THINK WE GOT DOWN HERE FROM THERE?

JUMP.

I AM ALMOST INDECENTLY DELIGHTED TO REPORT THAT THE ONLY LIFE SIGNS I NOW SEE ARE YOURS, PLUS MS. HOOD.

THE ENTIRE WEIGHT OF THE BUILDING, PLUS THE FORCE-FIELD RAMS, HAS REDUCED OUR TWO FRIENDS TO PASTE.

I SUPPOSE YOU EXPECT ME TO TELL YOU EVERYTHING ABOUT THE SHADOW COUNCIL NOW, SIR.

IT'D BE NICE. AND IT'D BE BETTER FOR YOU. FEWER CONSEQUENCES.

CONSEQUENCES.

END

#16 VARIANT

BY JAMIE McKELVIE & MATTHEW WILSON

#17 ARCHITECTS VARIANT
BY MARK BAGLEY, ANDY LANNING & FRANK MARTIN

SECRET AVENGERS

#18 VARIANT
BY DAVID AJA

#19 MARVEL 50TH ANNIVERSARY VARIANT
BY LARRY STROMAN, MARK MORALES & FRANK MARTIN

#21 VENOM VARIANT
BY KHOI PHAM & EDGAR DELGADO

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No time to lose. No margin for error.
And no one will ever know — unless they lose.

T+

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MARVEL